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NOTES OF THE WEEK

WE have never disguised our belief that M. Poincaré was in many respects an obstacle to Europe's convalescence from the effects of the war. His dogged determination to give France every possible military guarantee of security inevitably aroused similar ambitions in other statesmen, and thereby made the whole continent insecure. But we have also never failed to recognize in him a patriot of no common calibre, all the more remarkable in a country where a disinterested politician will soon be as extinct as the great auk. It was M. Poincaré's personality and courage that saved the franc three years ago from a collapse as complete as that of the mark. And it has been due to his effort alone that France has escaped the shame of refusing to ratify her debt agreements with Great Britain and the United States. It is cruel fortune that illness has compelled him to resign on the eve of the last battle—to be fought out this month at the Hague—to assure the military hegemony of France in Europe.

M. Briand, in succeeding M. Poincaré, has taken on an exceptionally difficult task. It was only the

trick of suddenly and prematurely dissolving parliament that spared his country a long and dangerous crisis. Perhaps it would be more accurate to speak of the crisis as being postponed; the Radical Socialists, furious that the new Premier tried to win their collaboration by the offer of a paltry under-secretaryship or two, will lose no opportunity of making trouble, and will certainly succeed in bringing about a crisis in the autumn. But there is, at any rate, a government in France to be represented at the Hague Conference. M. Briand is far more genial than M. Poincaré, but it would be a mistake to expect from him a very conciliatory reparations policy. While he has a reactionary cabinet to deal with he cannot with good grace and without conditions withdraw the French army from the Rhineland. The Hague Conference may be expected to drag on for many weary and ill-humoured weeks.

The debate on the resignation of Lord Lloyd from his post as High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan was quite definitely a victory for the Labour Government, thanks mainly to the fury with which Lord Birkenhead in the Lords, and Mr. Churchill in the Commons, belaboured the Government without first hearing their defence. Lord Lloyd has done great service in many capaci-

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ties, but it has long been evident to those who follow Egyptian affairs closely that he had not the exceptional gifts required by the British representative in Cairo. In his fear lest the four reserved points which stand between Egypt and real independence should not be respected, he too often interfered in the internal affairs of the country, and consequently found himself compelled either to bang his fist on the table and summon British cruisers to Alexandria or to withdraw humiliated.

No power on earth could keep affairs in Egypt exactly as they are now for an indefinite time. Change they must, and the Government in Whitehall, be it Conservative or Labour, has to do its utmost to see that they change in the right direction : that is to say, that our relations with Egypt improve while our communications with the Far East remain secure. Sir Austen Chamberlain made a notable effort in the right direction when he drew up his treaty with Sarwat Pasha. It would have improved Mr. Henderson's chances if Lord Lloyd's resignation could have been brought about in a different way, but he is perfectly justified in taking steps to assure the presence in Cairo of a High Commissioner who in his desire to protect the British Empire does not forget that Egypt is not, and never has been, a part of it.

Mr. Winston Churchill's speech in the debate on Lord Lloyd was one of the worst efforts of his career, but he raised one point of considerable interest. The example made of Lord Lloyd, he argued, would terrify into silence other British representatives abroad, and thereby increase the domination of the Foreign Office over them. He even suggested that the whole trouble had arisen owing to the jealous prejudices of the Civil Service against the appointment of a man who was not by career a Government official. The differences between Mr. Henderson and Lord Lloyd are not, we are convinced, based merely on petty jealousies in the Foreign Office, but there is, of course, discontent in that austere building when some distinguished outsider is made ambassador or high commissioner—and for the obvious reason that were this practice to be general the Diplomatic Service would attract no man of keenness and ambition. On the other hand, there is still, despite various attempts at democratization, a snobbishness in the Diplomatic Service which sometimes keeps existing members of it out of touch with the real life of the country in which they are posted, and at the same time may deter the best and most useful type of man from entering, or trying to enter, the Service.

Little is heard for the moment of what is happening in Manchuria : it is the custom of our newspapers to drop any political crisis which does not immediately lead to war. There is, however, as yet no indication that Russia and China are prepared to negotiate, or even on what terms their negotiations could take place. The Russians naturally demand return to the *status quo*, whereas the Chinese are reluctant to loose their hold on

the railway. It is quite possible that there will be neither a settlement nor a war, and that the Russians will content themselves with the occupation of territory in Outer Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan, from which no government on earth is likely to oust them. Meanwhile the stoppage of railway traffic makes it very difficult to send supplies to the garrison and population of Vladivostok, and should discontent lead to a revolt there it will be extremely difficult for the Soviet Government to restore order, especially in view of the number of White Russian refugees who will crowd across the border from Manchuria. Clearly events in the Far East still deserve to be followed with attention.

M. Dovgalevski, the Russian Ambassador in Paris, is now in London to discuss procedure for reaching a settlement between this country and Soviet Russia ; one of the two great obstacles in the way of settlement being our dislike of Bolshevik propaganda, there is a certain irony in the fact that his visit should take place at a moment when the Third International has been endeavouring to turn August 1 into a day of world-wide riots. Anti-militarist demonstrations which are deliberately intended to produce bloodshed are not very logical, and August is a holiday rather than a revolutionary month, but it is clear that as long as the Bolshevik regime exists there will be anti-Russian propaganda in this country, and anti-British propaganda in Russia. No really effective guarantee of non-interference will ever be obtained, but if the British Government can get a satisfactory settlement of the claims of the British creditors of Russia, and at the same time create that political atmosphere which will justify British manufacturers in giving long credits to Russia so that they can compete more successfully with Germany and the United States, we shall welcome warmly the resumption of diplomatic relations with Moscow.

Resumed negotiations having failed, the wages dispute between owners and operatives in the cotton industry took its course and on Monday the best part of 500,000 workers were locked out. At the last minute, when the Labour Ministry had brought the two sides together, the Weavers section of the operatives, representing half the employees, announced their decision not to participate ; thereafter the parley between the spinners and employers broke down also. There are as yet no signs of the dispute coming to an end. Workers are losing £2,000,000 a week in wages, employers will soon be watching orders going to Germany, America, Poland, and elsewhere. What will be the end of it ? Will it drag on like the coal lock-out of 1926-7 until the employees, their funds exhausted, drift sullenly back to work ? If so that will be, as it was with coal, not the end but the beginning of trouble. We must pray for a better fate for the cotton industry. There is hope in the announcement of the Government's committee of enquiry, with a sound personnel, to sit in private, which should enable both sides to discuss the situation frankly. It is suggested that a settlement might leave certain points con-

tingent on the report of the committee. In that case the sooner the committee can complete its task the better.

The Minister of Labour does well in deciding to correct the often erroneous impression made, especially abroad, by the weekly unemployment figures. The monthly figures, in the form proposed, should be useful. In the past, we have sometimes wondered what purpose the statistics of unemployment were meant to serve. Were they produced merely as mechanical exercise for the statisticians of the Department? Or to provide the Opposition of the day with ammunition? Or to supply texts for those odd patriots who spend their time explaining to the outside world that Great Britain is done? Or, as they should be, to reveal to all engaged in trying to cure unemployment precisely where lay the evils of our industrial condition? The recent figures certainly do not justify extreme pessimism. They show a great deal of unemployment, but also more employment than there has ever before been in the country. In six years, the number of the insured employed has risen by 900,000. Yet the figures can be misunderstood by those who peer at the weekly returns alone, and within the last few days a colleague of the Minister of Labour, the Attorney-General, has wept copiously where there was little occasion for tears. He will have less excuse for his lachrymose state when the monthly returns, accompanied by due explanation, are made generally available.

"Records" as such are for those who gape indiscriminately at giant gooseberries, motor-car speeds, skyscrapers, centenarians, and the rest; but the "record" made by the *Bremen* in crossing the Atlantic has this significance, that it reminds us of German resolution to recover lost parity or pride of place. It is not the achievement itself but the spirit inspiring it which should interest us. If ever a nation found itself thrust out of the struggle for a share in speedy transport of passengers by sea, it was the German on the morrow of the peace. It had lost its place, and it had to all appearance lost the means of recovering it. Ten years have sufficed to bring Germany level in some respects, ahead in this. How has it been done? It would be comforting to think that British captains of industry, not merely in the shipping business, were seriously racking their brains to discover the secret, and that British workers were feeling the spirit of emulation grow within them. Meanwhile, we must salute the vigour and persistence of the German effort to recover peacefully what was lost through violence.

Seeing how difficult it has been to get the Charing Cross Bridge to its present stage of a thing agreed, it is to be hoped that there will not now develop a bitter and delaying controversy over the high-level or low-level issue. On architectural merit the public is entitled to insist. That secured, and we know of no reason why it should be harder or easier to secure it for the one type of bridge than for the other, surely the sole consideration ought to be traffic convenience. We, in co-operation with Mr. D. S. MacColl, have been too long

involved in agitation for a sound scheme to be suspected of lukewarmness when we avow the intention of taking no side in high-level or low-level dispute unless and until it is shown that the one will better meet traffic needs than the other. Aesthetically, there is no *a priori* case for or against either. Any of the great bridge-designers of the past could have provided a dignified design to satisfy each set of conditions, and why should we assume that no equally supple talent is among us now?

The public mind is profoundly disquieted by the results of the long, careful, and cautious inquiry into the *Vestris* disaster. That ship sank seven months ago, and highly defamatory rumours reached this country from the investigation conducted in the United States. The public waited, hoping that the half of them were baseless, the other half exaggerated. Now, after the British enquiry, we have the truth. It is not pleasant to contemplate. We know now, beyond question, that the *Vestris* was overloaded, and not for the first time, by the standard which ships under the British flag are required to satisfy. Even so, she might have been saved had her captain sent out an appeal for help at the moment when the crisis arose. He did not: some of the blame is his, some attaches to owners who, no doubt for reasons seeming good to them and out of regard for other shipping, discourage panic calls for assistance. Into all that it is unnecessary to enter; the real point is that no British ship ought to be allowed to leave a foreign port when she does not comply with British regulations. It is in no way to the interest of foreign countries that she should. Undercutting is obviously objectionable to them, and overloading is a form of undercutting. Rightly approached, and assisted by the local British Consular authorities, they would be willing enough to check irregularities.

Because the "Jamboree," the gathering of 50,000 Boy Scouts of many nations, has released an immense amount of journalistic gush, let us not make the mistake of undervaluing either the occasion or the general work of Sir Robert Baden-Powell's organization. The Boy Scout movement would be eminently justified if it had done nothing more than provide a wholesome outlet for young energies else making for mischief or worse. It has done much more. Tens of thousands of boys in the Empire, to say nothing of those in foreign countries, are physically harder, more resourceful, more considerate, more alive, without priggishness, to the duties of citizenship, than they ever could have been without this movement. They have learned while they played, and are on their way to apprehending with Mr. Yeats that "the good are always the merry, save by an evil chance." Drama has been brought to many whom environment would else have made listless; and that is no small thing in a world which affords less and less opportunity for plausible pretence of being pirates or Red Indians. It has been good fun as well as good work. The only mawkishness is that provided by a section of the Press, and we do not suppose that does more than make Sir Robert Baden-Powell squirm.

A GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY

THE Miners' Federation demanded at Blackpool last week immediate repeal of the Eight-hour Act *plus* an increase of wages. They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. There is a Labour Government in office anxious to do what they can to redeem a promise rashly made; but the miners cannot recognize a friend. They pass resolutions that must embarrass the Cabinet and can do themselves no good. What they demand is impossible, and they—or at all events their leaders—must know it to be impossible. Their case for reorganization of the industry and return to a national wage agreement is strong, almost overwhelming. The rest is folly. A return to the seven-hour day would raise the cost of coal-production (according to present methods) by 2s. a ton in the North and 3s. a ton in South Wales; higher costs of production mean weaker chances in a desperately keen international market. Then where is the practical sense of demanding a seven-hour day *and* a rise in wages?

The Government, who promised much, have discovered already how difficult it is to give. They will do what they can to redeem their pledge. Before the House rose (as we noted briefly last week) they promised legislation to repeal the eight-hour day in the autumn; but when the new hours are to be enforced, and whether they will be seven or seven-and-a-half hours a day, they have so far left unspecified. One of their tasks is to relieve unemployment, and they know the result of raising the cost of coal-production will be to raise the figures of unemployment. Their other proposals were much more hopeful: to compel, if need be, the conclusion of district marketing schemes and the formation of a central national organization. This is tackling the job at the right end. If the wasteful internecine competition in the coalfields were abolished, if co-ordinated marketing schemes and all the other possibilities of reorganization and re-equipment were accomplished, the saving might be such that wages could be raised and hours reduced without disaster to our export markets. In Germany, rationalization proved so successful that despite a reduction of half an hour in the working day, production was increased and wages went up. Likewise the formation of a central body able to negotiate in the name of the whole British coal industry would bring nearer to realization the international agreement that is essential to the ultimate solution of the coal problem—which is in essence a world problem.

But these things are a long way off; the miners' leaders (and for that matter the owners) are showing no signs of statesmanship, and another winter will soon be upon us. There is a certainty of widespread distress this year as last. What is to be done to meet it?

Last week a meeting of South Welsh M.P.s laid before Mr. Noel Curtis Bennett, of the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund, the present plight in the coalfields. Relief from the Fund has been suspended during the summer so as to husband its resources against the coming months, but the need of relief goes on. By a fortunate coincidence the interim report of the Fund was published in the same week, so we are able to judge of the position. The extent of relief pro-

vided has been prodigious. It includes over half a million pairs of boots, over a million and three-quarter articles of clothing; it includes food, training grants, camps, allotments, clubs—numerous schemes for lessening the moral as well as the physical suffering of a stricken community. It got to work slowly, but the difficulties were immense, and it seems to have done its work well. Taking in families and dependants, a million and a half of the population of England and Wales have come within the scope of the Fund, and in providing for the needs of these more than £1,000,000 of the Fund's resources have been spent.

The Fund (which has been closed down) is left with roughly £600,000 to meet the situation that will confront it when relief begins again in September. No one can pretend that this is adequate. Last winter and spring the £1,000,000 spent did not cover, or anything like cover, all the needs of the distressed areas; the suffering was still acute. This year the Fund is left with little more than half this sum to meet needs equally great (there are still some 400,000 workers wholly unemployed in the areas covered by it.) Last year we urged that the responsibility for relief was the State's. The Government of the day tardily and partially admitted as much by agreeing to contribute pound for pound subscribed by private bounty. This is not enough: the Government must go the whole way. The response of private individuals and firms was magnificent (the Report lays special emphasis on the contributions paid week by week by workpeople out of their earnings) but it is not right that the State should escape its responsibility by relying on the generosity of citizens. History will call it a scandal. The physical, mental and moral deterioration of the population of the distressed areas is a national tragedy, directly or indirectly affecting the material and spiritual fibres of the whole nation, and it must be made a national charge. It is holiday time, full summer is still with us, many of us are at this moment bent on well-earned rest; but the seasons will not delay. The Government, if they are to do their duty, must take over entire responsibility before the cold weather sets in.

THE PRICE OF JUSTICE

IN denouncing the scandalous cost of litigation Lord Scrutton has done a useful service both to the Bar and to the country. In the case that provoked his outburst, the plaintiff, who is a Spanish woman of good family, had been required to find security for £250 costs as a preliminary to having her action for slander tried in the High Court at all. She could, of course, have had it tried more cheaply in a County Court, but perhaps she preferred the verdict of a jury, and in any case slander actions are often heard in a High Court. She had paid in £50 as security for the costs and that ought to have been sufficient, for the issues in such a case can hardly have been abstruse or complicated. In fact the estimated legal charges on the one side amounted to £208 10s. and on the other to £250. This sum (which was the estimated cost on the plaintiff's side) was made up of three items: £75 for the

solicitor's instructions in the brief, £100 for the leading counsel, and £75 for his junior.

There was probably about as much work in the case as goes to the writing of, say, an original column article in a daily newspaper, for which the ordinary competent writer will consider himself well paid if he gets ten guineas. Apparently truth in a court of justice is twenty-five times as costly as truth in a newspaper article. The learned judge observed that when he came to the Bar (it was in 1882) the ordinary fee on a leader's brief was ten guineas, and two for a consultation, and though the cost of living has doubtless gone up since then, it has not gone up ten times higher. And of course on the top of his own costs the unsuccessful litigant has also to pay the costs of the other side, or such proportion of them as the Taxing Master will allow. It means that a woman who thinks she has been slandered will have to risk at least £500 to have her case tried before a judge and jury, besides what comes out of taxes for the payment of the judge and the capital cost and upkeep of the court. Charges so excessive are equally bad for the country and the Bar, for by making litigation the luxury of the rich they vastly reduce the volume of work available for barristers. It is in fact falling off very rapidly, but the poorer and more unemployed the mass of barristers are, the bigger become the fees of a handful of men at the top of their profession.

Barristers must be left to look after their own interests; we are here concerned with the public interest, which is that the law should be not only good but reasonably cheap, and that a poor man should not be at a disadvantage with the rich man in obtaining justice. The theory on which litigation fees have gone up must be that the more money is spent the better is the chance of winning, and if it be true it must sooner or later be fatal to any real respect for the law and its administration. Fortunately it is true only to a limited extent. In the first place, the State provides a judge who makes it his business to assign their true value to the arguments on either side, irrespective of the skill with which they have been presented by counsel. In the second place, money does not necessarily command better service. The same press of work which makes a counsel's fees high prevents him from giving as much time to a case as a less fashionable but perhaps equally able counsel would do. Lord Birkenhead is not the man to depreciate the value of fashionable counsel, but he seems to think that clients are fools to give the money that they do: "If I became involved in litigation, the consequences of which were grave to me," he has written, "I would infinitely rather be represented by A, a competent and industrious lawyer, who I knew would not leave the court from the moment my case began to the moment it ended, than by B, who would, at ten times the fee, saunter into court to cross-examine a witness whose examination-in-chief he had not heard, or to reply to a speech which had unfortunately been delivered in his absence."

It is comforting to read that, because it gives some sort of guarantee that mere weight of money expended on fashionable counsel has comparatively little effect in determining the verdict or the judgment. Some famous counsel—Lord

Carson, for example—never accept more work than they can give their personal attention to; but in most cases extravagance in counsel's fees is the mere superfluity of litigious snobbery and is rewarded as it deserves. Nothing can save clients from this sort of folly but their own acquisition of some common sense. But the trouble with litigation is not with the foolish fees paid to fashionable counsel but with its generally high cost. Except that journalists deal as a rule with affairs of much more importance, there would seem no reason in the nature of things why the ordinary day's work in court should be paid more highly than a day's work of writing for a newspaper. But if the scales were at all comparable, litigation would be as cheap and as plentiful as articles in newspapers. As for the argument that is sometimes put forward that it is necessary for justice to be dear in order that able men may be attracted by the profession of the law, that is no more true of the law than of any other profession. Ability for ability, the law is overpaid by comparison with other professions; and the fact that so many lawyers make nothing at all is both a consequence and a commentary on that over-payment.

It is much easier to complain than to suggest practical remedies. Clients themselves are much to blame for the high cost of law and might do much both to cut down the fees of the fashionable men and to spread the briefs out more evenly. But men who are excited, or have so much money that they can throw it about, or both, are not easily reached by reason. If there is to be real reform the Bar itself must act. It would be a wholesome rule that no leader should take more cases than he can give personal attention to. For a leader to draw a large fee for a case in which all the pleadings have been drawn by a junior and in which he himself may have done no more than put in a five minutes' appearance in court ought to be recognized for the scandal that it is. For the fees of the junior are in the regular proportion of three-fourths to two-thirds of the fees of the leader, and the introduction of a fashionable leader will often treble and quadruple the costs of trial for no appreciable increase of efficiency. In big cases several counsel are necessary, but why should there be two counsel in a small slander action like that which moved Lord Justice Scrutton to anger? Why should not Taxing Masters refuse to allow costs for a second counsel in a case which in their opinion did not need one?

An even greater deterrent to court litigation than the magnitude of the costs when they do come in is the uncertainty of estimating them with any accuracy beforehand. No solicitor consulted by a client can give any but the vaguest idea of what the action is likely to cost if it is taken into court. In the United States the two branches of the profession—the solicitors and the barristers—are not separate, and a client who goes to law can have an inclusive cost quoted to him for the whole case. The costs of law in America are not noticeably cheaper than here, and indeed for specialized classes of work are frequently much higher. But the ordinary run of litigation is probably cheaper and it is in the

average, not in the exceptional, case that the costliness of the law is most felt as a grievance. The time may come sooner than many think for amalgamating the two branches here. Could not the solicitors make a move? It seems hopeless to expect the first move to come from the Bar, much as the Bar might gain by the change.

A NATIONAL MATERNITY SERVICE

IN the course of the present century, our infant mortality-rate has been halved; but, in spite of the great development of ante-natal clinics, maternity and child-welfare schemes, the stricter supervision of midwives, and the ever-growing recognition of the importance of aseptic midwifery, the maternal mortality-rate remains almost exactly where it was. Indeed, it has shown a tendency, during the past few years, to rise rather than to fall. Speaking at a conference last year, the present Minister of Health said, "Motherhood is the most dangerous thing in the world, but I am sure that this stubborn number of deaths every year could be prevented to a large extent if local authorities shouldered their responsibilities properly." But the unfortunate fact is that we do not yet know enough about the real causes of maternal mortality to be in a position to prevent it, or even materially to reduce it, by a mere increase of administrative effort. Dr. Comyns Berkeley recently quoted a statement that "there are two things known for certain about puerperal sepsis; one is nothing, and the other is that the medical attendant will be blamed." And he went on to ask: "What do we know about the predisposing causes of puerperal sepsis; of the immunity of the normal pregnant woman; of how to assist this immunity; of how to recognize if this immunity is failing? We cannot answer these questions."

It is commonly assumed that maternity is most dangerously achieved amid the evil sanitary conditions of the slums, where every object with which the patient is brought into contact embodies the very negation of surgical cleanliness. Yet, over a long period of years, the maternal mortality-rates in the over-crowded homes of the East End of London have been little more than one-half those obtaining in such districts as Hampstead and Westminster. Thus, whereas the average maternal mortality-rate in this country is over four per thousand births, the End End Maternity Hospital has attended in homes situated in the poorest districts of Stepney and Poplar over 11,000 cases of childbirth with only two deaths. Again, during the last ten years, the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, London, has attended in their own homes—mostly situated in very poor and over-crowded areas—16,518 cases, with three deaths, only one of which was due to sepsis. The recent Report on Maternal Mortality issued by the Scottish Board of Health states that "the analysis of the record of maternal deaths in Aberdeen over a period of ten years has not revealed any definite relationship between environmental conditions and puerperal mortality. Thus, in turn, cleanliness of house, size of house, crowdedness of house, and too congested areas, have been examined, and no significant association of any of them with puerperal mortality has been ascertained." We have been far too ready to use this tragic risk of maternity as a dialectic weapon, instead of studying it scientifically and without prejudice.

The British Medical Association has just devised for England and Wales a National Maternity Service scheme, which deserves the serious consideration of the public and of the Government. The scheme is based on three principles: "(a) That the normal maternity case can safely be treated at home; (b) That maternal mortality and morbidity can be very greatly reduced when proper ante-natal care and

supervision during confinement are provided in all cases, together with institutional accommodation for cases of complicated labour; (c) That maternal morbidity can be greatly reduced with proper post-natal care and treatment." It is estimated that of the 650,000 annual births in England and Wales, about 500,000 would come under this scheme. It provides that every one of the half-million mothers involved shall, at no immediate expense to herself, be entitled, during her confinement, to the services of a certified midwife of her choice, and to ante-natal and post-natal examinations by a doctor also selected by herself—every doctor being entitled to place his name on the list of those serving under the scheme. If the midwife, owing to difficulty or complication, needs medical assistance at the confinement, the selected doctor is to be available. In addition, the scheme provides for the services of an obstetric or gynaecological specialist when considered necessary by the practitioner in attendance. In every area, hospital beds are to be available for such cases as, in the opinion of the doctor, require institutional treatment. The total cost of the scheme is estimated at about two million pounds a year. Against that sum should be set the private fees at present paid by those who would come under the scheme; the cost to local authorities of existing maternity institutions; and the present fees paid by local authorities to medical practitioners called in by midwives.

The Association estimates that there is privately paid for the service now given in connexion with the half-million births proposed to be provided for under the scheme about £750,000 a year, and that the State and Municipalities spend an equal sum; but "for the present expenditure very few women get ante-natal examination or care, and still less get post-natal examination." It is suggested that, through the National Health Insurance machinery, an additional contribution, on behalf of employer and worker together, of a halfpenny a week, supplemented by a farthing a week from the State—which sum the State and Local Authorities are now paying in other ways—would provide all the money needed.

In considering a National Service of this kind, we have to bear in mind not only the percentage of parturient women who die in or soon after childbirth, but also the morbidity of the 99.5 per cent. of mothers who survive. A distinguished obstetric physician stated a month or two ago that, while "each year in Great Britain about 4,000 women die during pregnancy and childbed, it is probably understating the case to say that, for every woman who dies, at least ten pass on to recruit the army of ill-health, later falling out by the way from disease whose origins in the fact of childbirth are often very imperfectly or not at all revealed on the death-certificate." It is these 40,000 or more obstetric casualties that fill half the gynaecological beds in the hospitals of this country. Fortunately, although obstetrics itself can show no great recent advance, pelvic surgery has improved beyond measure.

It is sometimes said that what is needed to lessen the dangers of childbirth is more strict asepsis and less operative interference. Cleanliness cannot be too strictly observed; but, as all experience shows, cleanliness alone will not solve the problem. It is true, again, that terrible consequences not infrequently follow ill-timed and unskilful operative interference with the course of labour; but it is its unskilfulness and inopportuneness rather than intervention itself which should be held responsible for these disasters. Among our general practitioners are very many obstetricians whose experience, skill and judgment are as great as those of the most renowned specialist. These men are little heard of outside their own districts. They rarely figure at conferences, and their names are not often found in the news. Whether they practice in a country village, in a healthy suburb, or in a city

slum, their obstetric results are on the whole excellent. But, for every doctor thus competent, two may be found lacking all those qualities which account for his success. It is owing to these inexpert men and their unfortunate doings that the non-interference doctrine has many strong advocates and exponents. But non-interference may be only one degree better than mistaken or unskilled interference. As Sir Henry Simson said the other day, "The general public must be made to realize that Nature is by no means a good obstetrician, especially in first confinements." "I have been forced to the conclusion," he added, "that, in primiparae at any rate, a normal labour is not a common occurrence." The dangers of unduly protracted labour, with the structural damage and physical and nervous exhaustion it involves, are often as great as those of premature and excessive officiousness.

It is out of these and such-like considerations that hesitation in fully endorsing the B.M.A. Maternity Service Scheme arises. The scheme—in accordance with the idealistic dogma of the Association that all doctors on the Register are equal—discriminates in no way between practitioners in the matter of obstetric competence. That might be all very well if the minimum course of training in this subject were reasonably adequate and the minimum standard of practical efficiency demanded by the qualifying examiners reasonably high. But notoriously they are not, though the General Medical Council has lately made a small move in the direction of a higher standard both of training and of knowledge. Meanwhile, there seems small reason for subsidizing the—judged by modern standards—inefficient midwifery of which alone half the doctors in the country are capable. Obstetrics is, indeed, one branch of the medical art that can reasonably, if not too exclusively, be regarded as a true specialism.

QUAERO

But much that has happened, and that has been said, in Ireland during the last ten years must have greatly distressed her ideals.

It has become a question whether in future there will be much place in the national life for members of the race and religion to which the late Mrs. Green, like so many leaders of Irish intellectual and political opinion in the past, belonged. The Gaelic movement has created disquietude in this regard, and much of the argument by which the Censorship of Literature Bill has been advocated in the Catholic Press is based on a conception of nationality which makes aliens of the Protestant minorities in the South, whatever may be their politics. A cynic might say that the position which obtained in Ireland at the beginning of the eighteenth century has been curiously reversed. The Protestant minority of English speech, and largely though not wholly of English blood, then called itself the Irish nation. It was supposed that the "original Irish" were doomed to almost immediate extinction, and Swift described the Catholics in general as being "so mild that they would eat out of your hand." To-day "mildness" is all on the other side.

Thus recently, apropos of the Catholic Emancipation centenary, the *Irish Times*, the old organ of Protestant Unionism, recognized frankly that the Free State is, and will remain, a Catholic State. The Irish Protestant minority—the people of Burke, Grattan and Parnell—disclaims, it seems, any desire to recover leadership, or even to take part in the shaping of a new Ireland. It has no positive Irish policy, and no political organization, so that public life is virtually closed to any of its members except he surrender to the Gaelic cult which renders in logic all the past achievement of his race in Ireland a nullity. It might appear, therefore, that the Anglo-Irish, as the minority is now called, must remain a world apart which will only attract attention at electoral crises when it can by its few votes turn the scale in favour of one of the two almost equally divided Catholic and Gaelic parties.

All forecasts made by Protestant Home Rulers in the past have proved to be faulty. But in Ireland the inevitable never happens, only the impossible occurs. In reason, Mr. Bernard Shaw's forecast for Ireland in his 'John Bull's Other Island,' a twenty-year-old book (which it is interesting to re-read to-day) should have been correct. But imagine the fate of the Irish Protestant who should now come forward as popular champion of the people against the Church! Mr. Shaw marked the separation of the Irish into two camps: "One Protestant, gentlemanly, oligarchical; the other Roman Catholic, popular and democratic." Under Home Rule, with their oligarchy broken, the Protestants would take an energetic part in national government as champions of democracy against clericalism; and the Roman Church against which Dublin Castle had been powerless "would meet the one force that can cope with it victoriously." As a garrison under the Union the Protestants could do nothing "except consolidate clericalism." Mr. Shaw omitted to consider that even after Home Rule an unscrupulous propaganda might still successfully represent the Protestants as an English garrison. Yet he foresaw right enough that the party would not openly break its tradition, but would remain a party of the Union, standing, however, not for the Repeal of Home Rule but "for the maintenance of the Federal Union of English-speaking Commonwealths."

One should not be too hasty, however, in drawing pessimistic conclusions. Gaelicism is but an experiment, and other policies than that of a gradual further separation from Britain may be formulated and find favour with the Irish people. There is room for a part of the Union, and such a party would include many who did not belong to the old garrison. The problem is that of an alternative to republicanism and the reconciliation of national feeling with the British connexion. Nothing will be done by insisting

A LETTER FROM DUBLIN

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

THE death of Mrs. Green, J. R. Green's widow, did not pass unnoticed in England, where the greater part of her life had been spent. Her Irish influence was very great, and it is strange that no tribute to her work has yet been offered by her fellow-historians in Ireland. She initiated a research among old manuscripts and authorities with the nationalist thesis in her mind that English writers on Ireland, particularly on medieval Ireland, had deliberately and systematically perverted the facts for propagandist purposes. Her own presentation and selection of the facts—in, for instance, 'The Making of Ireland and its Undoing'—was open to some criticism. There emerged a description of a country happy in its laws, active in the arts and in industry, and in which, even after the coming of the Normans, the Gaelic influence remained long supreme. James Connolly, one of the leaders of the 1916 rebellion, exploited this account of Irish history to the profit of Marxian Socialism, finding in a class war conducted by the Gael against a feudalism and capitalism that was associated with the English conquest the true sources of the struggle for Irish independence. Names of "bourgeois" English-speaking patriots like Parnell, Thomas Davis and Grattan lost their glamour. Mrs. Green's work certainly encouraged many of the modern extravagances of Gaelicism. She herself was an Irishwoman come from Unionist and landlord and Protestant stock, a romantic nationalist of the nineteenth-century type, who wanted unity and believed that our racial and religious antagonisms must disappear with English rule. Unlike most of her sex who have been in modern Irish politics, she supported the Free State, and was nominated a member of the Senate in 1922.

in the manner of the Loyalist Press, *ad nauseam*, on our inevitable economic and political dependence on our neighbour. Nor does the slogan of the free, democratic and pacifist Commonwealth touch many Irish hearts. The solution is more likely to be found along royalist than along colonial lines. New means for the recovery of Ulster need to be considered; but, first of all, the title of Free State should go and be replaced by the ancient name of the Kingdom of Ireland.

THE NATION AND DRINK

II—PUBLIC-HOUSE REFORM

WHATEVER is to be done towards putting the liquor traffic on a satisfactory basis ought to be done nationally and through Parliamentary agency. Any other policy means handing over the problem to faddists, nine-tenths of whom secretly or openly desire prohibition. Yet it is just the opposite and mischievous policy which has most persistently been forced before the electorate since Sir Wilfred Lawson's Local Option Bill of 1864, which was no less than nine times revived in the next fifteen or sixteen years, which was followed by Harcourt's Local Option Bills of 1893 and 1895, and the principle of which has in late years inspired Lady Astor's Bill among other measures.

The case against Local Option is overwhelming. As Bishop Magee pointed out long ago, it is immoral because, after declaring a certain traffic vicious, it proposes the continuance of that evil wherever a majority of the local population desire it. It is thoroughly unconstitutional, since it isolates one matter from the general administration of the country, and moreover substitutes government by plebiscite for government by Parliament. It is tyrannical, because it allows a majority, many of whom are independent of licensed houses for alcoholic refreshment, to rob a minority of elementary rights. It is muddle-headed, because obviously the areas in which excessive drinking is the rule would not vote for "no license," and on the wild assumption that it did any good at all it would only clean the canary's cage while leaving the Augean stables untouched. Lastly, it is utterly unworkable in urban areas, where crossing a street may take a man from the sand of the Sahara to that which covers the floor of the Bull and Bush, and in an era of motors and motor buses would be nearly as ineffective in rural districts.

The policy to be adopted, then, must be national, and decided, not only as regards principle, but in every detail, by Parliament. In the present writer's opinion, formed after very careful study of all the available evidence, it should leave the licensing authorities the minimum, not the maximum, of discretion. Far too many of them seem to think that they are where they are to indulge their personal fads, instead of administering laws and regulations which have not condemned the sale of drink as a crime. Walt Whitman's "insolence of elected persons" was as nothing compared with that of some of these authorities deciding whether a weary working-man shall or shall not be spared a mile in his search for the refreshment he likes. What counts with them, or many of them, is that he has already the Pig and Whistle, so called, presumably, because it looks like a sty and whistling is the only means whereby it is ventilated. One "house" to so many inhabitants, or to such-or-such a fraction of a square mile: what more does the man want? Those who, not being democrats, respect the working-man, believe he may want to exercise a choice between squalor and noise on the one hand and cleanliness and quiet on the other. He may even in his audacity wish to discriminate between beer and fluids approximating to

it. Redundancy is a problem that may on the whole be left to solve itself. Under the Act of 1904, the number of on-licences has been reduced by about twenty per cent., while the population has increased by about the same percentage. Most public-houses are tied to breweries, and the brewers are not likely to continue indefinitely houses which meet no need and thus earn no profit.

But, undoubtedly, public-houses which do not satisfy the standards of civilized people ought to be extinguished if they do not within a reasonable time improve up to those standards. Improvements, as Lord Balfour pointed out in 1904, cannot be expected when there is insecurity of tenure and, we may add, exposed to the caprices of the licensing authority.

A sound policy begins to emerge: (1) Parliament should lay down very definitely that until the production, possession, or consumption of alcoholic liquors is decreed to be a crime, the mere act of sale shall not be hampered in any area, even in a hydrophil district. (2) Central metropolitan, other metropolitan, urban, and rural areas being assigned hours by Parliament, those hours should automatically be in force, without any hearing being given either to the local drunkard or the local busybody. (3) All public-houses which do not attain to cleanliness, ventilation, reasonable seating accommodation, or otherwise fail to comply with civilized standards, should be given, say, two years in which to improve, and should be mulcted in compensation for all delay after the first six months. (4) Where, which is by no means everywhere, even in urban areas, the provision of food as well as drink may reasonably be required, it should be made a condition of the licence. (5) Structural alterations desired by the licensee should invariably be sanctioned unless there is evidence that they will diminish the amenities of the house, and should not be prohibited simply because elbow-room means greater ease in getting a glass to the lips. (6) The utmost possible security of tenure should be given, accompanied by severity in cases of disorderly houses. (7) Generally, public-houses should be forced up to the standard set by the best of them; and extinction should be applied only to those which refuse to come into the movement, regardless of the number there may be in the area and of the abstainer-sadist's dream of a footsore man having to trudge for drink.

Hotels and restaurants should be as widely separated as possible from public-houses in the treatment accorded them by the law. Hours that are reasonable enough when public-houses are in question are utterly unreasonable for hotels and restaurants. At the same time, a very sharp distinction should be made between establishments that exist to meet genuine hotel and restaurant requirements and those in which, by means of cabarets, dances, and miscellaneous antics, persons not really needing either food or wine are attracted to supper tables. There should, in short, be two kinds of licences: one for hotels and restaurants which confine themselves to satisfying the natural needs of natural people; the other for "stunt-merchants," who deserve no special consideration.

As for night clubs—and others—that is the subject of the penultimate article in this series.

X.

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WAISTED LIVES

By OSBERT BURDETT

IT is never easy to distinguish between a shock to convention and a shock to conscience. For some centuries now some men have always worn corsets. Present-day tailors say that the custom is growing. It has long been associated with military men, especially with officers of a crack regiment, and yet convention declares the masculine wearer of a corset to be a horrid effeminate fellow; and this convention has held up its supercilious head for sixty or seventy years. The moment one sits down to examine the matter, however, one discovers a strange confusion in the public mind, and the matter is worth considering because here seems to be an instance in which a prejudice, admittedly strong, has little ammunition wherewith to defend itself.

In the age of Elizabeth, to go no further back, men were evidently corseted. Their waists were wasp-waists; their hips were emphasized; the thorax was plainly padded to swell the curve of their chests. No one yet has ventured to accuse the Elizabethans of effeminacy, and their swords are no better argument for masculinity than a Guardsman's of to-day. Both types accentuate the feminine contours of the figure; but the earlier is an accepted symbol of virility, the later of effeminate dandyism. If there is any reason to justify the modern prejudice, what is its ground?

When we turn from the man of fashion to the lusty worker, to the hewer of wood and the hedger and ditcher, the navvy and the stevedore, the railway porter, especially in France, and the carrier of heavy weights, we find an external leather belt worn to help the support of their abdominal muscles. Here again, among these strong fellows, the principle of the corset is justified on the simplest masculine grounds. Moreover, before making a specially strong effort, we see these men deliberately tighten their belts. It would appear, therefore, that the principle of tight lacing, which is regarded with peculiar contempt when adopted by men, far from being a necessary sign of effeminacy is a condition of strenuous labour.

Now few reflective persons would agree that men had become more masculine during the past hundred years, and it is during the past hundred years that the corset for men has become an object of derision. Roughly speaking, the history of opinion on this matter seems to have been something like this. In 1731 corsets must still have been common or a popular magazine of that year would not have thought it worth while to mention that a certain gentleman had "an invincible aversion to the stay, as giving a stiffness that is void of all grace." The corset for men was still common for the next eighty years, since Fairholt, in 1846, in his work upon 'Costume,' refers to "the men's custom of sometimes wearing it." Two years later one of Thackeray's characters in 'Vanity Fair,' which appeared in 1848, "tried, in order to give himself a waist, every girth, stay and waistband then invented." But about the middle of the nineteenth century prejudice against the practice was growing strong, for in 1867 we find a significant sentence: "His enemies said he wore stays and slept in gloves." When a certain Mr. J. Hatton wrote this line in a work called 'Tallants,' he was plainly reflecting current opinion, and the italics I have used are added to emphasize not only the prejudice but the change. In the 'eighties the aesthetes tried, with little judgment, to revive interest in men's dress, but if they tried at all to make play with the corset, it was only to outrage the Philistines and not because they were concerned

to show that, in principle, it is a masculine, not an effeminate, contrivance. It is indeed possible to argue that, when men finally allowed the corset to be appropriated by women, they surrendered an adjunct of their masculinity, for, when the woman's movement of the 'eighties was beginning to attract notice, a masculine poet of conservative tendencies declared that the women's effort to invade the pursuits of men was due to the "diminished manliness" of their brothers, a defect which feminine instinct endeavoured to supply by disorderly activity. At all events, the time when most men forsook the corset was the time when the masculine woman began to appear.

We are, of course, familiar with the argument that the too tight lacing of women during the nineteenth century was the cause of much displacement, miscarriage and disease, and that women never became thoroughly healthy in the modern sense until they abandoned the corset entirely. No sensible person wishes to defend the abuse of any garment, but it is highly probable that, lately, fashion has swung too much to the other extreme. The slim, corsetless, waistless fashion of recent years is not defended by all doctors, some of whom declare that women need some abdominal support, especially when they play strenuous games and after their confinements, and that the absence of such support is responsible, in its turn, for physical troubles. In short, the case for a waist-belt of a reasonable size and fit requires no defence for either sex, nor can the abuses to which the habit may degenerate be regarded as evidence of effeminacy in the habit itself. Biologically, man is still a quadruped standing awkwardly on his hind legs; and his body is not very well adapted to the Erect Posture, which he supports with difficulty still. Read Sir Arbuthnot Lane, *passim*!

With these facts in mind, it is not easy to see the grounds of a prejudice, which admittedly exists and, as such, is worth investigating. One could well understand the dislike, which I share, of feminine contours in a man, were it not that one scarcely notices them when regarding the portraits of Elizabethans. Raleigh and Essex do not look effeminate with a tiny waist, wide hose and swelling thorax. Is it that all the figures of history now appear to us like figures in a fancy-dress ball, and that we are blind to the clothes of our own day because we see in them only conventional tokens—tokens too much associated with class-prejudice, conventional prejudice, mass suggestion to be considered with detachment—from the sensible point of view of beauty and fitness combined?

I do not wear a corset. I have no stays to sell. I only want to discover why the men who do, and not always by any means conspicuously, need be ashamed of admitting it. Some of them, indeed, have curious tastes of their own. They admire to excess the small waist, and wide hips; and I have heard of one eccentric who, when he was a very little boy, prayed hard to God to grant him when he grew up a huge abdomen. This man admires a gigantic tummy still, perhaps because his prayer has not been granted! The cult of slimness fills him with the same disgust that is excited in other people by the opposite extremes of stoutness. Amusing though this eccentric person's taste may be, it does not affect the question why, in the face of the evidence that a closely-fitting belt is a matter of course in men's most strenuous occupations, the wearing of such a belt, when visible to the eye (extremes apart), should be regarded to-day, common though it is, as a sign of effeminacy.

I pause for a reply. If a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming, it may also throw some light on the real, but less pronounced, tendency to regard an interest in men's clothes as unmuscular weakness. The cult of carelessness in modern dress for men has gone indeed to lengths that, once one has become aware of it, are not distinguishable from bad manners.

POLISH INTERLUDE—II

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

AT Poznán, we stayed at an hotel that had been specially built for the exhibition. This hotel was a capital example of modern architecture, and the rooms were superbly comfortable. But something had gone wrong with the service. (May I add here that the Pole, like the Englishman, makes a bad waiter, from which you may argue the future greatness of Poland?) On the very first morning, after we had been travelling half the night, I could not discover any breakfast. It was one of those mornings when it is impossible to live, to come to terms at all with life, without breakfast. I rang bells, without anything happening; and finally descended into the entrance hall. There I was seized upon and promptly introduced to about ten smiling officials from the exhibition. They were excellent fellows, I could see that; they had clearly been waiting for us, in that entrance hall, for about an hour; it was a shame; but the fact remained that I wanted some breakfast. At last I found a room in which about six of our party were just finishing their coffee and rolls. They told me that there had once been talk of an omelette, but that as there were no signs of it ever arriving, they had contented themselves with coffee and rolls. I too ordered coffee and rolls. The others departed. I sat there, waiting for my coffee and rolls. Half an hour passed, not very pleasantly. Then a waiter entered, triumphantly, one huge smile. He was carrying the largest omelette I have ever seen, about two feet long and six inches broad, and this monster he proudly set down before me, on the bare table. An omelette had once been ordered; an omelette had now arrived. Ah!—the genial lunacy of those days.

The Polish National Exhibition at Poznán is nearly as large as Wembley, and far prettier. The Poles are proud of it, and I do not blame them. For a new country, still suffering from the effects of the war, that exhibition is a triumph. I met men who had worked, almost day and night, for two years or more, organizing it, and I admired them. I did more than that; I walked miles and miles in their exhibition, passing places that offered one iced beer and shaded chairs without so much as a wistful glance. I looked at exhibits until I was dizzy, and some of them, more especially the peasant costumes, the wood carving, the drawings, I thought enchanting. What I would not do was to stay for the second half of the revue to which we were taken, the first night. I am sorry now that I did not stay, that we all did not stay, for it appears that the leading lady and the leading gentleman, learning in advance that a party of English visitors would be present, had gone to the length of learning a duet in English, with which to astonish and delight us. This duet was performed in the second half, and—alas!—there came no burst of hearty English applause, for we had gone. I still feel sorry about this. If I had known, I would have submitted for another hour or two to those hard wooden chairs, that close atmosphere, the elaborate jests in Polish, and the frantic and alarming disrobing of the Koszutski Girls. It was much more amusing

at "The Merry Village," where there were huge switchbacks and waterchutes and all the fun of the fair, gloriously spangled in electric lights under the deep blue of the midnight sky. It was here that Foreign Affairs and I won our crimson rosettes, which we wore in our button-holes for the rest of the visit. We were awarded these for knocking down four little dummy men with a football, a feat that each of us performed three consecutive times, to the great content of the onlookers. I am not sure that this was not the great moment of the whole delightful visit.

The next day was grimly hot, and we had one of those official lunches that lasted from 1.30 to 4, and had to drink toasts, make speeches, and talk in the wreckage of three or four different languages to one's amiable but exhausting neighbours. These lunches were always very tiring; moreover, they always began with vodka, and vodka of many different colours; with the result that they never failed to introduce what might be called a subjective element into the remainder of the day's events. That is why I cannot be sure that I did not dream that visit to the chateau place. I remember driving from the restaurant back to a remote corner of the exhibition, where we saw, in an atmosphere of Arabian heat and dust, some wonderful Arab horses of a kind that were being bred in Poland. I remember taking my place in a car, and being grateful for the rest and the cool air that flowed round us once the car began to move. Then I fell asleep, and when I opened my eyes again we were standing in front of this chateau place, miles from anywhere. We might have been in the middle of the Steppes.

The sun seemed fiercer than ever, and it was pleasant to climb the large staircase and find oneself at last in a long apartment, shaded, and cool as a cellar. Still dazed, I stared at swords and manuscripts and suits of armour. Even when you are at home, a nap during the afternoon leaves you dazed for a while; and this was abroad, most fantastically abroad, and I had fallen asleep in one place and awakened in another, and how long we had been, how far we had come, where we were, I did not know. I wandered out on to a balcony, which overlooked a moat, still filled with water, and a wide avenue, flanked with noble old trees and so long that it seemed to dwindle to a green pinpoint. Everything was still: it might have been a back-cloth. Only the shimmer of heat disturbed the scene. I might have been dreaming in a hot-house. There were voices behind me, and I discovered, in the nearest room, the rest of our party gathered about the owner of the place, Countess somebody, a delightful old lady in sweeping black clothes. She was speaking in English, but in a curious sing-song tone, which made events already remote in time remoter still; and she was talking about an English governess she had had and her childhood in the 'sixties. Then there were tales of the old generation of aristocratic refugees, in a shadowy Paris. And the queer, half-chanting, half-querulous tones went on and on, and nothing I heard, nothing I saw, seemed real. The chateau that was nowhere, the green slime of the moat and the long vista beyond, the Countess and her antique ghost of a governess—oh no, this would not do. I had not invented

it myself, but somebody had; it was all a chapter of some odd and forgotten romance that had come gliding back—deceitfully objective—into the memory. Even yet I do not believe in that afternoon. It was part of a story that is still jogging on somewhere; and I merely contrived to get mixed up in it for an hour or two.

It was a day or so before I really recovered from that break with reality. The trouble was, one never had a chance to take hold of things properly, standing no nonsense from them. That very night we were shot round to a station that seemed to have more people in it than any station I have ever seen, people wearing side-curls and beards, strange hats, and riotous shawls. We climbed into a coach filled with sleeping berths and then talked excitedly in the corridor for half an hour. The train went swaying into the dark. I undressed, performed a short acrobatic act, which landed me finally in an upper berth, and then lay awake for an hour or two, during which time the train seemed to me moving at an appalling speed. After that, I dozed off, occasionally waking when we stopped, and hearing mysterious sounds and still more mysterious voices outside, where lanterns were being waved about in unimaginable stations. Deep sleep must have come to me at last, however, and I awoke to find the train moving quietly through the full flush of morning. Only four of us were left, the remainder of the party having left the train at an earlier station, to visit coal mines and zinc works. But we were going straight through to Cracow, and that is how we got there. Can you wonder that I shook hands limply with those smiling people who came to welcome us at the station, and could only mumble at them? I don't mean merely that I was tired (though I was): but these pleasant people were obviously convinced that they were real, and that Cracow was solidly there; whereas I was far from feeling sure about these things. The rest of the morning I moved about quite cautiously, for the whole business was still too brittle, and if I wasn't careful why, Cracow might break like an eggshell!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¹ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, though he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

² Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.

LORDS REFORM

SIR,—You point out in an article of July 27 that "all Governments are frightened of tackling a subject [the reform of the House of Lords] which must consume much time and risk division within the party." Since this reform is urgent, and Parliament is reluctant to deal with it, would not the formation of a House of Lords Reform Society be advantageous?

This society could canvass the various schemes suggested, and do the necessary testing and influencing of public opinion. If this preliminary work were done thoroughly outside Parliament, the eventual passage of the reform measure should be fairly easy.

I am, etc.,

DONALD ANDERSON

Junior Naval and Military Club,
96 Piccadilly, W.1

CONSERVATIVES IN OPPOSITION

SIR,—In your issue of July 27 you say, when discussing the "Comedy of Westminster," that "The Conservative Opposition has not yet found its feet," adding that "The Back Benchers on the whole are at present merely blundering."

Well, Sir, surely the wonder is not that the Conservatives have done so poorly in Opposition but that they have done so well, considering that they had lately spent four years and a half in passing, under the coercion of the party wire-pullers, Socialistic measures of which they privately disapproved? Nothing is so demoralizing and disheartening as to spend years in supporting and defending measures which in your own heart you detest.

I do not say, of course, that by any means all the Bills passed by the late Government were distasteful to their Parliamentary supporters, but I think there is no doubt that if Mr. Baldwin had taken ballots on the principal measures which he or his lieutenants pushed through Parliament, he would have had half of them turned down.

The truth is that Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues were chosen by the people between four and five years ago in order to secure "Tranquillity and Economy" for a country which was badly in need of both, but once in power they were led astray by men—like Mr. Neville Chamberlain—of ambitious vision who thought that the best way of securing another term of office lay in "dishing" the Socialists by passing measures to which the latter were pledged.

Unfortunately for the success of this policy, while the Whigs could be dished since their programme was strictly limited, there is no such thing as dishing the Socialists since their plan of campaign is capable of indefinite expansion, embracing Radical theories on the right hand and Bolshevik ambitions on the left. Really, if Mr. Baldwin would but believe it, Honesty is the best Conservative Policy, for we, his followers, are by nature very poor liars and make only a bad show when supporting and applauding—for the sake of votes—measures in which we have no belief.

Moreover, the Conservative Party is at the present time dwelling largely in an enervating atmosphere of make-believe. For instance, some of us still use the term "Unionist" in spite of the fact that the Union of Great Britain and Ireland has been repealed, while, in order to sham ignorance of the real position of affairs and to ignore the fact that we are now being ruled by the party of Revolution, we like to speak of the "Labour" Party. Further, although the Empire has disappeared and has been replaced by a voluntary Association of Independent States, we still persist in talking about "Imperialism" and "Imperial" Leagues.

I am, etc.,

The Grange, Scarcroft,
Nr. Leeds

C. F. RYDER

PRIVATE OPINIONS OF A BRITISH BLUE-JACKET

SIR,—In his review of the 'Private Opinions of a British Blue-Jacket,' Mr. Edward Shanks not unexpectedly raises the question of whether the book is what he calls "genuine" or not. He says, "If we can really imagine Mr. Taplow sitting down in the fo'c'sle 'to write,' then he acquires a certain fascination. But if Mr. Maclarens has made him up, then a great deal of the charm of him disappears." The trouble is surely with Mr. Shanks's own imagination, not with anyone else's. He admits that William Taplow probably has a real existence, and then proceeds to say that if the character is "a creation of the imagination one cannot help feeling that a little more imaginative power might have gone to the creating."

But if Taplow is so "real" as to make Mr. Shanks believe in him, how could any more imaginative power on my part (if I were the real author) be necessary or even possible? In Taplow's own words, "if this is a argemint i will call for my top hat glubes manacle and be Of."

It seems to me, in fact, that this talk of "jokes being funny because they are true" and not otherwise and so forth is mere fatuous humbug. (I am glad to think that Mr. Shanks himself is not responsible for the idea—and must thank him for a review on the whole very sympathetic to William Taplow.) But since when has art ceased to create? Or to put it another way, if an author is capable of making a learned critic believe in one of his (the author's) characters, may it not be said that that character is made to live? Only in the mind, of course—which Mr. Shanks apparently does not consider very important.

I am, etc.,

Cobsland Windmill, HAMISH MACLAREN
Turville, Bucks.

P.S.—Perhaps I have not made it plain that it is neither Mr. Belloc's *dictum* nor anything that Mr. Shanks says directly that I meant to call humbug: rather the *idea implied* by Mr. Shanks's referring to the Bellocian prescription for a good joke in such a connexion. For what on earth have jokes as such got to do with William Taplow? It is certainly fatuous to place *admittedly successful* creation of character on the same level as a mere comic-paper joke, and I cannot believe that Mr. Shanks really thinks as he has written. If he does, however, I should like to warn him not to find Taplow quite devoid of humour all of a sudden; because it is possible that I am still writing in the heavily facetious style of my Introduction.—H. M.

VACCINATION RECONSIDERED

SIR,—I would refer your correspondent "I Seek" to the Statistical Tables appended to Sir George Newman's Annual Reports on the State of the Public Health. He will there find that, of the twelve or thirteen million children born in England and Wales since 1912, considerably under one-half have been vaccinated. Few authorities, nowadays, claim that the protective value of vaccination endures for more than six or seven years at most; so that well over half our total population may be regarded as unprotected against small-pox by vaccination. The unvaccinated majority are in no way protected by the vaccination of the minority; and may justly and soundly be compared with the 100 per cent. who are not immunized against diphtheria—the deaths from which in the four-year period quoted were not twice, but over two hundred times, as numerous as those from small-pox.

I am, etc.,
QUAERO

THE THEATRE

AL FRESCO

BY IVOR BROWN

MAKING holiday in Scandinavia I found that all the principal theatres were closed during June and July and I was, I confess, thankful. Had they been open I would have felt an urge of conscience to go in, to be critical, to make comparisons—in short, to work. As one who spends three or four nights a week in the theatre, I have no inclination to be a holiday playgoer; the drama's pause the drama's patron craves. And so, no longer one of the patient oxen of the stalls, I enjoyed instead of some high Nordic passion the serene, long-dallying shadow-play of the Stockholm summer

night. Rare beyond any setting was the view from roof-garden or cliff-perched villa on the multitudinous fiords as night turned them to steel mirrors for the afterglow of day, while the scattered city of islands, woods, and palaces was dwarfed to a family of fireflies as the lights peeped out across the water. Naturally I approved the Scandinavian habit—which is to make the most of summer. We, in England, always moodily pretending that our summer is worse than it is, make the least of it. The Scandinavians have a real winter and are determined to gather the sunlight while they may. At the beginning of June the schools break up and they do not reassemble till mid-August—just when we are madly assuming that holiday time has only begun. Everybody who can do so spends mid-summer in the air and the water, yachting, bathing, sun-bathing, and generally avoiding walls, roofs, and clothes as being the prison-cells of winter's long dominion. We, for a whole five weeks after mid-summer, keep our young pent up in school and choose the dog-days to inflict upon them the heaviest examination of the year.

I have never been able to understand the English habit of stopping in town and school until August. The London Season very often ends exactly when the hot weather ends and it is the curious pleasure of the rich and elegant (who alone have full liberty of moving their habitations as they please) to crowd into London's restaurants, theatres, operas, and dances exactly at that period when their country houses would be most refreshing and enchanting. Now, when the sweet o' the year is far passed and the countryside is a sun-soiled parchment instead of a tapestry of waving green, they are off to the country. The long evenings of June and July, so cool and murmurous under the trees, they spent in the playhouse or the dance. Not so the Scandinavian, who knows that cities are for winter and the water for the summer. Just when London is socially packed, Stockholm is socially empty. If you want to go to the play, you do so in the open air. So, too, in Copenhagen. When the large theatres close, the summer theatres open with trees for scene and sky for roof. Of course performances must now and then be washed out, but the risk is a fair one. Surely it is better to chance an occasional wet night, which prevents the open-air performance, than to keep actors and audience (if any) perspiring in closed theatres during a series of heat waves.

Stockholm has four or five summer-theatres, of which I attended one. Like much of the city the theatre has been cut out of the rock and the auditorium has a background of cliff which acts as a container for the sound. They played a musical piece of small account, but elsewhere they were doing in the open a "straight" play of Selma Lagerlöf's, which a complete incapacity for the Swedish language warned me not to approach. Our musical affair was unambitious, a romantic trifle that waltzed itself along on a gravel stage (pity the poor dancers!) and sang its amorous complications to the bushes, the rocks, and the tobacco-smoke of the assembled citizens. Unless acting be purely rhetorical or ceremonial, like the Greek, the open air must admittedly blunt its edge. The warmth and intimacy of walls cannot be won and the actor, pitting his voice and passion against infinity, has a far harder task to "get" his house. The result is that pastoral plays, either in England or elsewhere, always tend to have a rough and amateurish air. There cannot be a sharp edge on the acting; finesse is frayed by the conditions, and I am sorry for the singer whose canopy is the milky way, whose sounding-board the stars.

But some at least of the difficulty can be met by choosing only such pieces as may well be harmonized with "the soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs." Our piece was such a one, a Napoleonic interlude with coach and tavern, soldiers on leave, officers out of

temper, lovers in Hessians, and a dancing chorus of village children. There were no fine issues to be touched; a laughing way, a waltzing way, and a general open-airiness sufficed. The orchestra tinkled away in a lodgment that looked like a village cart; the fat servant rolled his eyes like Mr. W. H. Berry; the village maid trilled her passage through tantrums to triumph; her various lovers and the plump little comic lady slapped their boots with riding whips and cast their troubles to the clouds. It was all a good deal less than sublime and a good deal better than the concert-party which is our main English contribution to the open-air theatre.

Why cannot we have such summer theatres in England? Hampstead Heath is rich in obvious sites and nearly every town must have some similar spot. It is far better thus to get among the trees than to sit stiffly round the bandstand while the Gay Sparks render 'Sonny Boy.' There are, it is true, organizations which carry folk-song and dance to Hyde Park on rare occasion and amateurs have pastoral outbreaks at this time of the year. What is wanted is a regular and planned supply. At Rogate, in Sussex, there is a woodland theatre whose memory makes me of dolour and envy all compact when I am called to some stifling London theatre in midsummer. Such arenas have not only a natural sweetness; they have also the greatest recommendation in these days of absurd theatre-rents and staggering building prices. Fortune was their architect and they are ready-built; a few pounds spent on equipment is all the outlay. Why do not the managers who vow that Shaftesbury Avenue has become financially impossible appeal to the County Council or the City Fathers and ask for summer lodging in the parks or on the commons? It might take a little time to persuade the public to come out instead of coming in. But, in such a summer as we have so far had, the pleasure of basking in an evening breeze would be strongly persuasive. The pieces should be vivacious and canter with musical honours. Song coming through the branches has an extra sweetness so it be well chosen, and, although the open-air humorist may feel the lack of close contact with his human target, it has never seemed to me that the funny man of the Pierrot troupe was too much handicapped even though the groundlings trod on gravel and the wild waves were his rival. And then, at the close, instead of coming out into petrol fumes, roar, racket, and a sultry street, there may be a stroll across the grass with the city-lights as a string of lanterns beckoning home. Scandinavia persuades me that we have neglected a good player—namely Al Fresco.

BROADCASTING

FRENCH light opera is just that much lighter than our own product to make it difficult for English singers to perform properly. 'Le Roi l'a Dit,' by Delibes, is not the sort of stuff that can be dealt with by amateurs. Comic opera needs as much care as anything of the "grand" type, a fact which we are apt to forget, as is evident from the way in which we positively encourage local amateurs gaily to embark on performances of Gilbert and Sullivan without the smallest capability for attacking those difficult works, and with distressing results. Gilbert's words demand the light touch and the easy manner; Sullivan's tunes must be given in perfect time and intonation or their shape and lift will fade. Ability to do these things only comes to the studied professional, hence the folly of entrusting the affair to casual amateurs. 'Le Roi l'a Dit' can be placed, for matters of performance, in the same category with the Savoy operas, and, of course, the B.B.C. performance was up to professional standard. Nevertheless, the

thing was rather heavy-footed. Apart from that, however, there was some good, and much pleasant, singing. Curiously enough, both chorus and orchestra at times sounded suddenly vague and ineffective. I imagine this was caused by the relative positions of those two bodies and the conductor.

* *

Sunday evening's concert was enjoyable if only for the Mozart concerto. The pianoforte solos were unimpressive. It was a pity they were included, for they took up too much time, with the result that the orchestral piece which followed (Brahms's Variations on a theme by Haydn) was hurried, many of the repeats missed, and the exquisite seventh variation (*grazioso*) disgracefully scrambled. These things ought not to be.

* *

The Diary of a Nobody has ended, and Mr. George Grossmith no longer may charm us with excerpts from the life of Mr. Pooter. These readings have been a great delight, and the same sort of thing might justifiably be put on again. There are many more springs to tap. What about Artemus Ward, for one of them? His humour is very special and the source of his wit rare enough to intrigue most listeners.

* *

Is charwoman-humour so vastly amusing? 'Mrs. Buggins Sees it Through' was a successful attempt to make a new form of entertainment, that of the charwoman being hauled in to manage a B.B.C. vaudeville show. Miss Constanduros did the part very well, and except that it all went on far too long the effort was mildly diverting. I know that it takes all sorts to make a wireless audience, and no one realizes more bitterly than I that the critic's duty is to sink self and become objective as he sits listening. For all that I wonder whether 'Mrs. Buggins' was worth all the trouble expended on it (the show was well done in almost every part, and Mr. Stanford Robinson, who was down as having "composed," had interspersed some favourites among his own tunes—or so I thought I heard). Who, after all, is so interested in charwoman-humour as to sit through an hour to it? Charwomen?

* *

A selection of interesting broadcasts for the coming week. Monday: Miss Ishbel MacDonald on 'Queen Margaret, the First Scottish Nurse' (Scotland). Tuesday: Miss Mary Adams on 'Are all Men equal?' (2LO), Surgeon-Captain L. F. Cope on 'A Day in the Life of the Navy' (Bournemouth), Mr. C. Henderson on 'The Cornish Gorsedd' (Plymouth). Wednesday: Mr. Edgar Ward on 'Photography for the Motorist,' Lord Lugard on 'Past and Present in Africa' (2LO), Miss Winifred Rowse on 'Irish Wedding Customs' (Belfast), Two plays (by Lennox Robinson and Reginald Arkell) presented by the Bath Citizen House Players (Cardiff and Swansea). Friday: Mr. A. L. Simpson on 'Homeland Explorations' (2LO). Saturday: The opening night of the Promenade Concerts relayed from the Queen's Hall (2LO).

CONDOR

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—179

SET BY L. P. HARTLEY

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an attempt to estimate, in the manner of Marcel Proust, and if possible to illustrate by examples, the exact social position of Little Lord Fauntleroy. Entries should be in English and should not exceed 250 words in length.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a poem, not more than 20 lines long, describing a heron disturbed at its fishing and flying away. The poem may be in blank verse or in any metre the competitor chooses.

RULES

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 179A, or LITERARY 179B).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of the rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the *first post on Monday, August 12*. The results will be announced in the issue of *August 17*.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 177

SET BY GERALD BARRY

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a prose rendering in the style of Henry James of the following quatrain:

Half a pound of twopenny rice,
Half a pound of treacle;
That's the way the money goes;
Pop! goes the Weasel.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a list of twelve adjectives—in common use in their negative form—which are never used without their negative prefix. E.g.: *Hevelled* (*from dishevelled*); *mayed* (*from dismayed*); *hibited* (*from inhibited*). Examples should be better than these.

REPORT FROM MR. BARRY

177A. Near-James is evidently as easy to manufacture as what Americans call near-pearls. I was surprised at the number of competitors who turned out stuff that would pass quite creditably at a first reading for Jacobean parody. The real thing is harder, and about a dozen soon asserted their superiority. In the end the management of the "Pop" turned out to be the test by which competitors stood or fell. Some of them shirked it altogether, others attempted it rather too much as though James's other name were Boanerges. Of the seven finally left, Doris Elles is easily the best and gets first prize; the second prize is just won by S. M. F. from Lester Ralph, who began excellently but finished rather less well. Seacape was good with "a measure common enough in domestic categories of weight—shall it be half a pound?"; and Pithecanthropus, though rather long-winded, introduced some beautiful touches and ended almost perfectly. These, George van Raalte and Non Omnia are commended.

FIRST PRIZE

One couldn't not see, of course, that the two things intrinsically and most tremendously differed. The very note of their unlikeness was beautifully stressed by the easily sensed graininess of the rice as opposed to the utter gloom and tenacity of the treacle. The fact of the half a pound being in it for both didn't in any sense of the thing do away with that particular and oh overwhelming sensation of two-ness. As for

the mention of the twopence for the rice didn't it establish at once in an undeniably rich fashion that the money *was* in it for something? was, in fact, being intensely and irrevocably disbursed in just that peculiarly extravagant manner? But even allowing for the rice and the treacle and the money as one doubtless would do somehow or other, that didn't explain how one was ever so slightly going to connect the situation concerning the weasel. Not that one was made to ultimately, of course, for one couldn't so much as pretend that it wasn't a perfectly definite conclusion—that extraordinarily passionate movement, in short the Pop! with which the weasel did in fact put such a wholly amazing end to the argument.

DORIS ELLES

SECOND PRIZE

The question of financial expenditure is too steep for the present chronicler to tackle at the present moment, or, indeed, too steep—as it were—for a wilderness of moments. But there is one way in which money might "go"; be—so to speak—"chucked about" with an immense satisfaction. It might be spent without financially discounting the criticism of an ultimate master, on a pound, or even half-a-pound of—let us say—rice; and if the quality must be fixed, mayn't we, with a certain hesitation—if an interlocutor permit—take a daring leap to the meagre foothold of "twopenny"? Add to our parcel half-a-pound of treacle, and the singularity of our choice might be mitigated by the urbanity of its—to us—till now entirely unexperienced, Cockney flavour. Whether this is—or might be—so, there can be little doubt that it would be—at least for us—the way the money "goes." For if expenditure isn't the question posed, then what "the deuce" is it? So I venture to reiterate that in whatever way the money is "chucked" it does indubitably "go." Nor, in spite of any possible unawareness, must it be forgotten that all the time just *there*, lurks a Weasel—the Weasel, in fact—whose vocal reverberation, I hasten to add—also "goes" quite too beautifully "pop."

S. M. F.

177B. If I had thought more about correcting this competition when I set it I should have refrained. Not only was I inundated with entries, even from people who thought any adjective robbed of its prefix would do, but the task of deciding justly between one word and another became almost impossible. The application of certain rules dismissed a good many. I am grateful to a competitor for reminding me that corrigible and maculate are both to be found in Shakespeare; all who gave these (maculate was particularly popular) went out. Later, deciding that originality deserves some recognition, I discarded those who chose adjectives most commonly chosen by others. I also decided against cog (from incog), though the idea of travelling cog is pleasing, and likewise poo (not Winnie, but the positive of napoo) and also doo-weel; though I was grateful to Janhope and others for bringing a little humour into my task with these, and to Janhope also for the delicious word compoopish (from nincompoopish) which really deserves a prize all by itself. In the end, of course, decision was largely a matter of personal preference, and eventually, with much misgiving, I have chosen Angela Verne for first prize and Alice Herbert for second. Both their lists have weaknesses, but both are stronger than the rest in what I consider good examples of what I wanted. Ane, couth, kempt, ert, sipid are words that ought to be adopted into the language; so are effable and gruntled. In the course of judging I have brightened my vocabulary with several others, notably scrutable and traught. But compoopish will take some beating. The word that worries me in Alice Herbert's list is gainly. I cannot find it in any dictionary, but if there is no such word I can only say there *ought* to be.

FIRST PRIZE

Gleeful, kempt, gusting, pudent, ane, chalant, ert, effable, mune, couth, dignant, peccable.

ANGELA VERNE

SECOND PRIZE

Sipid, couth, astrous, ert, effable, gainly, gusted, exorable, cordant, pudent, gruntled, famatory.

ALICE HERBERT

BACK NUMBERS—CXXXVI

A LONG while ago in one of these articles it was said, with reference to Oliver Madox Brown, that the chief marvel of precocity in our literature was Dolben; and this week I am moved to try to establish that truth. Chatterton is really outside the argument since at his best he is a definitely achieving poet, and reference to his age is then an impertinence. Were the argument extended outside English literature, Rimbaud would equally have to be excluded. Narrow and soon diverted, Rimbaud by nineteen had not only written several poems which must endure as long as the French language, but had created a new poetry, in a sense in which Chatterton, for all the wonder of his reversionary and anticipatory work, cannot be said to have done. And there is something else to be claimed for Rimbaud, setting him apart from everyone except, laugh who will, Shakespeare: the power of doing the work and turning away from it. Certainly, it is very much less to have resigned the lordship of a savage principality than an empire; but Rimbaud trading in ivory and ostrich feathers throws a ray of illumination, if but one, on Shakespeare settled at Stratford. Let Verlaine print the poems, as Hemingway and Condell the plays!

* * *

Dolben, to return to him, was neither the agent of a great revival nor a resolute innovator. His artistic development was conditioned by a religion which, so far as I can understand it, seems unlikely ever to have produced work of the imaginative fervour of Crashaw's or of the sheer beauty of George Herbert's. To be sure, the pen, till a man has complete mastery of it, is a distorting instrument, and his religion may have been less sentimental than in most of the boy's poems it appears to be. But, compartmenting his mind, Dolben sheltered his religion from the pagan enthusiasm which he also felt. It was no affair of Verlaine's 'Parallèlement,' in frank surrender to each of the opposed moods, with such a courageous and unanswerable defence as Verlaine made of a most human and poetically valuable inconsistency. It was an uneasy compartmenting, in consequence of which the religious poetry got no benefit from the pagan sanity, not even the benefit of a thoroughly appreciated contrast, and the pagan gained no gravity.

* * *

So far as this greatly gifted boy had a central idea it was, it must be confessed, puerile and very unpleasant. Many of his most intimate poems were written in extravagant adoration of a senior school-fellow at Eton, a talented and high-minded boy who then and in maturity commanded the respect and admiration of everyone. Of necessity, these poems were mawkish, but worse remained to come. It appeared to the boy, turned into some kind of Anglican monk and dreaming feverishly of conversion to Rome, that he had given to his friend, who was spared knowledge of the silly transports, what was due to Christ. This was the "sin"—Dolben was well-nigh incapable of doing anything wrong by the standards of human beings—which he lamented at length. By a further exercise of fantasy, he assumed that the friend, who was quite unconscious of the nonsensical entanglement, was in some way implicated; so he was hysterically implored, in verses he never saw, to repent.

* * *

That, one may well say, is what comes of bringing up a boy in an atmosphere charged with the ideas of "sin" and "repentance." The worst he has done or contemplated doing is something for which, even according to the stricter code of heaven, cherubs would

not be smacked, had they a smackable area. But "sin" simply must be part of the luggage of the tottering and defiled pilgrim of sixteen, and it is therefore invented. There results a morbidity which, unlike most morbidity, is useless to art, and an unhappiness with which it is impossible to sympathize, though one may pity it.

* * *

Dolben, so far as I can see, was not moving forward in a development which would have cured him of all that kind of thing. The paganism which inspired all but two of his better poems was probably dying down in him, and for reasons already given the prospect of great religious poetry from him was not bright. But who shall confidently predict just what might or might not have followed when the materials for prediction are work done at seventeen and eighteen?

* * *

Digby Mackworth Dolben was born in 1848; he was drowned in 1867. Eton, where he was fag to his distant cousin and eventual editor, Mr. Robert Bridges, but out of touch with the average boy; periods with various tutors, after he had been encouraged to leave Eton on account of some religiously-motived breach of rules; and complicated flirtation with various High Church or Roman organizations: these were the events of his life. Mr. Bridges, in a too elaborate but sometimes subtly discerning memoir, has conveyed to readers an idea of the boy's saintliness and personal charm, and there is the unconsciously drawn portrait in the poems themselves.

* * *

One of the two best pieces Dolben wrote,

The world is young to-day:
Forget the gods are old,
Forget the years of gold,
When all the months were May,

has found its place in some anthologies. The finer piece, 'He Would Have His Lady Sing,' is promoted by Mr. Bridges to something like superiority over 'The Blessed Damozel,' but not there shall we find anything comparable with the vision of Time, like a pulse, shaking fierce through all the worlds. All the same, it is first-rate *pastiche*, with a vivacity of imagination lifting it out of that category in certain lines, and altogether a coloured and charming thing, to be compared rather with some early work by Richard Watson Dixon. One of the religious poems, beginning, "Strange, all-absorbing Love," though not cited by Mr. Bridges, seems to me an almost complete success. And there are good translations, from Catullus, from Ovid, from Sappho, with this from the Italian:

I, living, drew thee from the vale
Parnassus' height to climb with me.
I, dying, bid thee turn, and scale
Alone the hill of Calvary.

* * *

For the work of so young a writer, most of the poems printed by Mr. Bridges are notably free from contemporary influences, and there is hardly one without some finely original epithet, such as "the *uncreated* noon of Paradise," or turn of thought. Apart from the futile morbidity already remarked on, but present only in some of the religious poems, Dolben's worst fault, natural in a boy's work, is allowing the poem to take him into untenable positions, clearly not aimed at in the beginning. He would have done more spiritually healthy work if he had oftener known the mood in which he wrote,

Suppose it but a fancy that it groaned,
This dear creation;
but he did enough to have a small permanent place
among English poets.

STET.

REVIEWS

THE LEGEND OF "KING HAL"

By EDWARD SHANKS

Henry the Eighth. By Francis Hackett. Cape. 12s. 6d.

MR. STRACHEY has much for which to answer, but even he has never called himself a "psychohistorian," an expression which, I confess, when I encountered it, filled me with premonitory dread. And on the whole, I did well to be alarmed. Mr. Hackett is one of those biographers who leap ferociously at the subject, screaming that they will have his heart out. He gives no mercy either to Henry or to anyone who ever came near him. He hacks away at the bodies in a ruthless endeavour to expose the inmost viscera, but he leaves an impression as of an anatomist who has conducted a dissection with vigour and determination but with the instruments of a butcher. The carcases are laid open indeed, but the organs have been so much mangled as to afford little illumination to the student.

Yet it is a subject on which illumination is earnestly to be desired. Henry's own character, his passions, his fears, and his weaknesses, had a greater influence on the course of history than those of almost any other of our monarchs. I do not mean to repeat the old delusion that, had Anne Boleyn been less attractive or of an easier virtue, England would still have been in communion with the Church of Rome. There were other reasons why Henry should have quarrelled with the Pope, and if not he, then one of his immediate successors. But the precise form which the quarrel took has left its lasting mark on English politics, down to the day, not so very long ago, when, of all odd results, it sent Lord Brentford and a Parsee Communist into the same lobby to vote together against the encroachments of Rome.

Mr. Hackett is not without the qualities required by an historian of the more modern and lively type. Some of his wider observations are exceedingly shrewd and suggestive. He begins with a disquisition on kingship in the sixteenth century in which academic historians might find something to learn :

The class to which he [Henry] belonged has been marvelously extended since the sixteenth century. The number of new dynasties since 1500, the lard dynasty, the tin dynasty, the steel, the railway, the newspaper, the cotton, the coal, the rubber, the oil, the motor, has so crowded upon, and depressed the reputation of kingship that modern magnates are not unlikely to be unfair to their prototypes, and to see Henry and his kind in the light of nominal monarchy, instead of seeing them as men and brothers, the founders or managing directors of great corporations and trusts.

This throws the searchlight of the historical imagination from an unexpected angle upon the dynasts of the Renaissance, all of whom were, in respect to the positions which they held or coveted, men as "new" as any Rockefeller or Morgan.

But Mr. Hackett can never, throughout a very long book, quite make up his mind whether he is an imaginative historian or an historical novelist. He makes highly unjustifiable guesses at the inmost thoughts of his characters and presents them in the form of assertions, as when he says of Cromwell that "to hound priests, to clear out abbots, to destroy relics, to explore the whole mythology and pathology of the medieval establishment gave him a definite and acute satisfaction," or, of Katharine Howard, that from Henry's advances, "at first, she must have skipped away, her blood curdling." He takes us to the child-bed and death-bed of Jane Seymour :

Baptism, at the moment, was a sacrament in good standing, and as Edward was given his dip in the healing waters, his mother, Jane, big-eyed with fever, her head throbbing with wild signals, her hands clasping brocade in cold perspiration, and a stream of noise, wrench, reek, chaos and infamous agony clashing through her body like cymbals shattering at her ears and nails scratching on window-panes, she half-saw and half-imagined the triumph of her life, while Death, raising and lowering its curtain, obliterated her and allowed her to recover, and lifted her in cold sweat to smell once more the holy candles and swoon again in the nausea of another black descent.

In other words, Jane, after giving birth to Edward, died of (I suppose) puerperal fever. That is really all the historian knows or needs to know : I am sure he does not know whether she heard noises like cymbals or nails on window-panes. This passage, which is in any case an example of extraordinarily bad writing, is also an example of the manner in which Mr. Hackett pads out, to five-hundred-odd pages, matter which he might have expressed much better in less than half the space. Not that he is incapable of doing this sort of thing as well as in the lines which I have quoted he has done it badly. His book abounds in sentences equal to this, descriptive of the Blounts, the family of one of Henry's mistresses : "Their part in the court was like that of the tiny goldfish whose mouths open and shut sympathetically while the bigger goldfish are actually being regaled."

His more melodramatic and highly-coloured fits, however, merely divert him from his proper business, which is painting a portrait of Henry VIII. There is no portrait of Henry here, and so well does Mr. Hackett realize his own failure that as late as page 336 he suddenly bursts out into negatives :

But this great bouncing King Hal, this prince of good fellows, who was to divert himself by doing to two wives what so many men have never been able to do even to one wife—this Boniface among Kings is one of the most vulgar and fatuous and horrible of illusions. This big-faced, little-eyed man, whom Holbein has immortalized, is not a healthy soul, who went through wives as some men go through socks, with a kind of hilarious destructiveness. Henry did not lead a life like a barn dance, where one girl after another was slung into his embrace and slung out again. Rabelais, in whose kind arms our friend Jean du Bellay was to die and go to Théâtre, might have invented this grand, ruddy, pot-wallowing, trilling and trolling Falstaff of a Henry. Otherwise he never existed. He is the myth of the eternal schoolboy who goes by the picture on the cover.

Mr. Hackett begins with the idea, no doubt justifiable, that "bluff King Hal" was a legend. But he never succeeds in showing us even his own idea of the reality. Yet Henry is a study worthy of the acutest observer's attention. Left wealthy, he was before the end of his reign so far impoverished as to be obliged so to raid the hoardings of the Church as to make a definite dividing-line in the history of his kingdom, and then failed to retain any substantial recompense from his brigandage. With a magnificent physical endowment, he early contracted a disease that forbade him healthy progeny, and gave him a sickly, tortured and shortened life. With much display and a vast deal of resources behind him, he conspicuously failed to acquire any military glory and exercised surprisingly small influence upon the affairs of Europe. He was, as Mr. Hackett well discerns, a magnificent façade with something meaner behind. But what that meaner thing was Mr. Hackett fails to tell us. He takes at one moment the point of view of the historian and at another that of the novelist, but from neither does he attain to any clear vision of his subject. It is possible that if he had kept more closely to his point and eschewed incidental decorations, he would have been more successful. It is also possible that he has taken refuge in incidental decorations simply through despair of being able to achieve his main object. However this may be, his book does not even begin to enter into competition with the best imaginative study of Henry and his times extant, that made by

Mr. Ford Madox Ford in his trilogy of novels 'The Fifth Queen,' 'Privy Seal' and 'The Fifth Queen Crowned.' Mr. Ford, to be sure, exercises the professed novelist's privilege of not citing his authorities. But Mr. Hackett is not much more communicative about his, and I should require to be convinced that his work is the better documented of the two.

HOW TO THINK

The Art of Thinking. By Ernest Dimnet. Cape. 6s.

FACED with a little masterpiece from the pen of a writer of such distinction as the Chanoine Dimnet a reviewer must needs shrink from employing the glib adjectives of praise that so readily come to the mind. With Professor Dewey he would say: "Before a work of art one is likely to be dumb or to indulge only in ejaculations; and when asked why one likes it, to reply 'go and see for yourself.' That is the way I feel about this genial and witty book." Where else will one find so much light, air, wit, and grace in a book on such a theme? One can only think of that very different masterpiece, the 'Voyage autour de ma Chambre.' It speaks well for the taste of the American reading public that this book should have been a best-seller in America for five months. The book has met and survived the author's own admirable test of a new work which is implicit in his sage advice to neglect what does not last more than twelve weeks.

What is the art of thinking? It is different from the science of thought, writes M. Dimnet, and consists largely in finding out what gives our intellect its satisfaction without any effort or restlessness, but essentially it is the art of being one's self. Why bother about thinking at all? The doctrine that underlies this book is that thought alone counts, and thought cannot coexist with anything that is not oneself in its highest and noblest possibility. With this in mind we consider in succession thinking, obstacles and helps to thinking, and creative thought. And what is thinking? Is there any need to suppose that thinking ever takes place? The behaviourists tell us that they find the hypothesis unnecessary. M. Dimnet, who is writing not so much a philosophical essay as a brilliant manual of mental hygiene, is content to identify it with the regulation of the images which people our minds. The use of the mind for merely practical ends is hardly to be termed real thinking. And life, it is observed, does just the opposite of what it is supposed to do: "It travels away from thought, and the process begins when we are ten years old." Thinking is not the reading practised by most people which is "nothing else than a method of not thinking." In fact, thinking is the contemplative life. No doctrine could be more valuable than this, in an age when, as the author pointedly observes, printing has gone mad and the world is in danger of being submerged by an ocean of books. Like Tolstoy, he suspects the deluge of printed matter. Does the deluge really help? Do we not sometimes envy the Chinese their famous "burning of the books"?

If reading may be bad, talk may be worse: "What a mockery to repeat that speech is the instrument of thought when it has become the mere satisfaction of a physical craving." Are we as different from gramophones as we like to suppose? How much of conversation is really just the making of friendly noises? Let us consider the obstacles to thought. The principal group, in M. Dimnet's judgment, is made up of obsessions or inferiority-complexes. A tribute is paid to the value of the work of the psycho-analysts but, as is very justly said, few of us really want or need to study the worst hospital cases. "Mental para-

sites," as obsessions are called, are regarded as mainly due to imitation, gregariousness and education. The last must give us pause. Every system of education has its critics, and rightly, for every system of education hitherto devised has its faults. In this book, American and French education are compared, the excessive athleticism of the former, the exaggerated importance given to literature in the latter. Lastly, "Thought is weakened by life." M. Dimnet quotes Plato with effect: "Experience takes more away than it adds, young people are nearer ideas than old men." He himself adds: "Young saints are not scarce, an old one is a delightful exception."

Then follows a succession of chapters on helps to thought, in particular, exterior solitude, interior solitude, and "time." In no part of the book is there better, wiser or wittier advice. The writer would liberate the "man or woman imprisoned in his or her paltry existence, and endlessly attentive to its shabby details." Exterior solitude can be attained if we really wish it, for no magnetism is so strong as to overcome a man's desire to be let alone. Interior solitude, or concentration, can be attained if only we are interested, and that is the real key. And what of time? Like every observant man M. Dimnet has noticed, and does well to remind us, for it cannot be said too often, that it is the busy people who have time for everything; the idle who have no time for anything. But he is aware of difficulties—the telephone, which drives some people to "take rooms out" in order to be undisturbed, and, he might have added, the loud speaker, which threatens to make the British Museum the only quiet spot in the British Isles. But most of all our guide would have us save time, thought and energy by order and method. Let there be these in our mental life. Make notes and put them in order and ready to hand; be business-like and sensible in the things of the mind. This is the advice and it was followed by the saints. "I was deeply impressed as a youth," writes the author, "by the advice of a spiritual writer to read one's own spiritual notes preferably to even famous works. All saints seem to have done so." And it is not a matter for saints only. We cannot afford to be unbusiness-like and untidy if we would be and achieve our best. There follows a most instructive and amusing couple of examples, drawn from the writer's own experience, of two very ordinary men who achieved and still maintain very great eminence by the methodical and steady employment of the talent they have: "They exhibited the qualities of the plodder—what obituary notices call indomitable energy."

Is there anything else we must do to be saved? Yes—we must stimulate our thinking by reading and we must never read except for pleasure, that is, we must read what really interests us, skip as we like, make books our servants, not our masters. Who is the model? The late King Edward VII: "King Edward VII, who never read, was, however, up-to-date in two or three literatures: shaving, dressing, smoking, he would ask questions of intelligent people or have significant bits read out to him, a truly royal highway to knowledge." M. Dimnet does not need to be told that the method has its obvious dangers. He is concerned to argue that unless we read with a mind active and questioning, not passive like a bucket, we can hardly be said to be doing more than drugging, and he carries his advice to the point of saying that the way to read a newspaper is to mark it, cut it up, and file the bits. This is the way newspapers get written, and it would thus appear that it is only those who write them who ever really read them.

What we are gradually being led to is the highest, that is creative, thought. It must be sincere, it must be simple, and all agree in the precepts, which are "Be Yourself and Find Yourself." This is not mere platitudinous uplift, as witness the saying of the

Parisian Jewess, which is quoted with approval: "I should not be natural if I were not affected," and the author's comment which accompanies it: "Most people die without saying anything as terse."

If it be true that there are occasions when a writer is seen at his best when he does not appear, then the reviewing of this joyous book must be one of them, and to convey as much of its author's intention as possible is a proper function of a reviewer. More criticism of the book might obviously be offered, first of all on the score of the danger of giving advice, more particularly to those who, with some justice, fear as the Devil anything remotely suggestive of uplift. But the author is an acute psychologist. We love to receive advice. When so much of it is genuinely good, "merely too sensible," and, in addition, the kind we like, what more can we ask for? More particularly for those whose lives are a busy or an idle hurrying off in most directions at once this book is obviously indicated and in part designed. But no one could read it without delight as well as profit. Here and there a philosopher might demur, those who have really found themselves may not need it. But no one should pass by so sweetly reasonable a plea for order, sense, and a taste for intelligent reading, and so superb an example of the art of being a really universal uncle.

THE SOURCES OF BLAKE

Blake and Modern Thought. By Denis Saurat. Constable. 14s.

M. SAURAT'S not very happily entitled book is a learned, patient, and at many points successful attempt to discover the rough material out of which Blake fashioned his myths. The book is honourably distinguished from most of its kind not only by the merits just noted but by its terseness, its clarity, its pervading common sense, and its author's resolve not to tease his own meanings out of the prophetic books. Blake, as M. Saurat bluntly says, has suffered from "an excess of interpretation." So this latest student of him gives us, where he can, the source from which Blake probably drew certain of his myths; indicates the limits within which reference to the original or putative original may assist us to understand a writer who transformed, or at least gave his own twist to every adopted idea; and leaves us, thus better equipped, to produce our own detailed interpretation, if we choose to do it.

The three main sources to which M. Saurat directs us are the literature of Gnosticism, the Cabala, and Sonnerat's 'Voyage to the East Indies,' though he also sends the reader to those eighteenth-century books in which Celtoniania and the Druid legend were ingenuously expounded. Sonnerat is a find, not so much on account of the mass of Blake's borrowings from him, for indeed Blake borrowed little that is ponderable, but because here we can be confident that Blake read the book. Who can doubt that some of the most curious names, thoroughly un-English in the placing of the vowels, when not made on a hint from the pseudo-Ossian unmentioned by M. Saurat, were suggested by Sonnerat? Here are some of Sonnerat's, produced in a lucky ignorance of the Hunterian system of transliteration that was to come much later: Allenoron, Emardarmen, Outamabaden, Amnemonta. And is it not as nearly certain as anything of the kind can be that Sonnerat, rapidly summarizing the wild welter of Hindu mythology, encouraged the hasty proliferation of Blake's myths? In the Hindu mythology, especially as Sonnerat presents what he knew of it, divinities and semi-divine beings are spawned or produced by fission on a scale and with a speed

stupefying to any but Asiatic minds, and not within even Blake's power of comprehension.

In regard to Gnosticism, the ground is wider but more treacherous. Blake may have read Mosheim's 'Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantine the Great,' in the Latin of 1753—there was no English translation till 1813. Whether he read it or not, he probably heard some of the ideas it discussed. His Urizen, the God of this world, certainly corresponds closely, up to a point, to the belief in an Architect of the world, holding mankind from knowledge of the true God; and Blake's revolt against a mechanical morality, though it has its own characteristics, has the same pretext as the Gnostic, of being rebellion against the edicts of this lower and in part evil deity. Perhaps no Gnostic would wholly have accepted, but most would have understood, what Blake meant when he wrote, "Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, the four pillars of tyranny," and denounced "natural selfish chastity," and hymned "the lineaments of gratified desire." As to the Cabala, of which Blake may rather less uncertainly be supposed to have had direct knowledge from Rosenroth, whose association with More had relatively popularized him among English occultists, it is plain that Blake's Albion is the Total Man, Adam Kadmon, of the Cabala; and when that idea is associated with the Celtoniania which Blake may have derived from such works as Jones's translation of Pezon, Stukeley on Stonehenge, the writings of Edward Williams, we are near the conception of Albion-Jesus, the reconstituted Adam Kadmon who was English. Light is thus thrown on the famous

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?

It is obviously impossible in our space to do anything like justice to M. Saurat. We can but, as we have, note two or three arbitrarily chosen points. And since we cannot here summarize his whole argument, which is very rarely pushed too far, it would be unfair to urge objections against details. But in relating Blake to his probable sources M. Saurat seems to us to have passed rather too lightly over the differentiating quality which sets Blake apart. He was, as M. Saurat would agree, a poet and artist even more than thinker and impatient writer on revelation. Though precise equivalents cannot be found for his vast, strange, symbolical figures, Urizen is roughly the isolated Intellect and Los is roughly the Imagination. (If M. Saurat had remembered Shelley's preface to 'The Cenci,' he would have found a rather curious parallel, in Shelley's statement that the imagination is as the immortal god who must be incarnated for the redemption of mortal passion, to one of Blake's idea about salvation.) The problem with Blake seems often to pass out of the region of religion or philosophy into that of art. Right and wrong are "Satan's labyrinth," and the ideal state is that in which human beings converse only of "eternal realities as they exist in the human imagination." "I know of no other Christianity . . . than the liberty both of body and mind to exercise the divine arts of imagination . . . The Apostles knew of no other Gospel."

It is necessary to ask ourselves constantly in studying the ideas of Blake whether he is speaking of the thing itself or of the thing as matter for art. Clearly, whatever other motive may be at work, his rapture over energy, even though or especially when it wars with mechanical morality, is the artist's rather than the occultist's. And here we may record our surprise that so diligent and sharp-sighted a student as M. Saurat, in noting Blake's influence on modern thought, has not taken account of the immense effect Blake's doctrine of the absolute value

of energy, regardless of its direction, has had, not on abstract thinkers, but on artists. It may be an anti-climax, but it is a fact that out of that idea has come everything in decadence that does not derive from the ironical perversity of Baudelaire.

ON THE STAGE AND OFF

The Song of My Life. By Yvette Guilbert. Translated by Beatrice de Holthoir. Harrap. 21s.

Harlequinade. By Constance Collier. With a Preface by Noel Coward. The Bodley Head. 15s.

HERE is a certain sameness about the reminiscences of distinguished actresses. They all take a roseate view of life—they would be ungrateful if they did not. They all find the world beautiful, and most of its inhabitants adorable. They all lead the same kind of lives, meet the same famous people and make the same rather commonplace remarks upon them. Indeed, unless there is something very individual about their art (as in the case of Mlle. Guilbert), and unless they are prepared to discuss and explain it, there seems at first sight no particular reason why publishers should compete so eagerly for the honour of printing their memoirs rather than those of any other well-travelled and well-known members of the community. Yet, as Miss Constance Collier remarks in her modest little introductory note (she leaves all the "blather" to Mr. Noel Coward in his preface), "it is always fun to look over other people's fences, into other people's boats," provided the story be told simply and honestly. And both of these are notably honest and simple books.

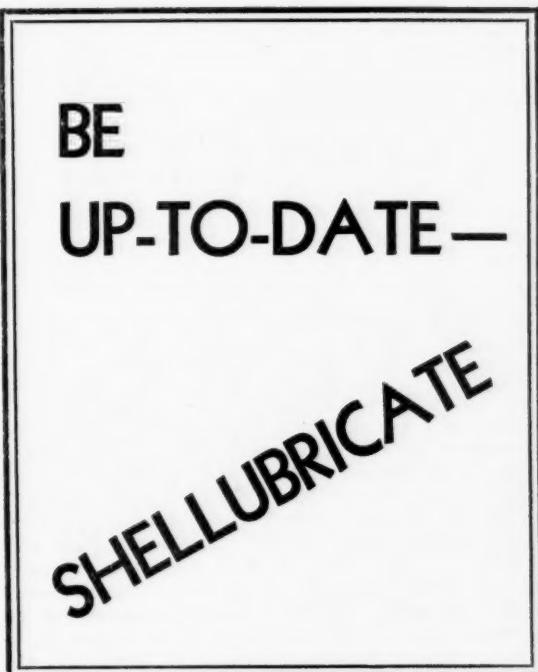
They have other qualities which lift them above the ordinary level. Both writers began life in humble circumstances, without money or influence to help them. Both won early success; both, in later life, were prostrated by painful illnesses, and were subsequently compelled to resume the struggle at a time when they might reasonably have expected to enter upon that leisurely, butterfly existence which all stage favourites are popularly supposed to enjoy. The consequence is that, while they were both well aware of their natural gifts and always believed in themselves, they are inclined now, on looking back, to lay most emphasis upon the necessity of constant study and hard work. There is little suggestion here of gilded ease. Mlle. Guilbert's mother was a Parisian seamstress and maker of ladies' hats, and her daughter remembers her "wearing old boots, that had once been my father's, hurrying across Paris with me at her side," often in the rain or snow. They would sell their hats to the smaller shop-keepers; and "Oh, those miles we tramped with soaking feet!" Miss Collier's earliest recollection of her childhood is being put to sit among the grease-paints and powder puffs, while her mother "went on" to play some small part in a provincial "fit-up" show. In neither case was the father of any great assistance.

Nor was success easy. "It has been sheer hard work," says Miss Collier, "and my own ability, and my natural gift to seize opportunities and try my hardest to better myself and my talent and never to think I was good enough." And Mlle. Guilbert, looking back upon her triumphant career, can "declare without any false modesty that if I have had a life of rich success I have deserved it by my life of work that is not yet interrupted at the age of sixty." Both have had their failures and relate them with refreshing candour, blaming no one but themselves. The great Yvette Guilbert, at the very outset of her career, was hissed off the stage at Lyons, the students in the

audience shouting brutal jokes about the slimness of her wonderful figure—for slimness had not come into fashion then. Her methods, she explains—the long black gloves, the economy of gesture—were entirely new, and the public could not be expected to accept them immediately. "But I, I knew that I was more intelligent than they, and that I could become anything I chose." She was then only seventeen.

Somewhat the same thing happened when she came to England. London took her to its heart at once; but Manchester, the provinces—"To be howled down is called in slang to 'get the bird'; well, I got an aviaryful!" Even in London, in 1909, the famous performing chimpanzee, Consul, was a dangerous counter-attraction. "Time to come down, Miss Guilbert," the call-boy at the Palace would announce, "you're on after the monkey." And as for the provincial towns of the United States—but Miss Guilbert really does not seem to be very fond of Americans. It is a point on which she differs from Miss Collier. The latter, on the whole, has fewer rebuffs to record—and fewer resounding triumphs. But her first decisive step up the ladder of fame was a painful one. She was suddenly called on to the stage at His Majesty's during a rehearsal and told by Tree to read the part of the goddess, Pallas Athene, in Stephen Phillips's 'Ulysses.' The whole company and the author stood looking on. She was taken by surprise; she had never played blank verse in her life; but she struggled through the scene somehow. There was a dead silence. Then Stephen Phillips said, "Well, at least she has the profile for it." A few months later she was Tree's leading lady.

It will be seen that these are inspiring books in their way—books that might almost be said to have a moral. But they contain also the usual crop of lively personal anecdotes. Mlle. Guilbert tells an amusing story of King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, and Miss Collier a genuinely pathetic one of poor little Dan Leno at the time when his powers first began to fail him. Miss Collier, of course, is the more serious of the two. Her art is not so subtle as to need much explanation, and she tells us little about the technical side of her career. But we expect something more from Yvette Guilbert, and after some search are rewarded by two or three illuminating passages:



Both the actress and the *disease* should have, besides beautiful diction, the capacity to light up or diminish words, to put them in a high light or plunge them in shadow, according to the sense. . . . My enunciation adds to my pronunciation, of which I take the greatest care, and which I know to be very fine. . . . All the artistic resourcefulness and skill of the actor, in the hands of a singer without a voice, and who bids the piano or the orchestra sing for her—that is really my art!

When she first went on the stage she was proposing to take singing lessons. No less a person than Gounod, to whom she had just been introduced, prevented her. "No," he said, "someone would manufacture you a voice, a register, and you could never get out of it; as you are now, you have every voice, without having one at all—that spoken song is your 'marvel.'" Happily for the world she took this wise advice.

GENERAL BOTHA

General Louis Botha. By F. V. Engelenburg. Harrap. 15s.

THE whirligig of time has seldom been better exemplified than in the career of Louis Botha. The soul of the protracted Boer resistance against the overwhelming might of the British Empire, he afterwards became one of the strongest pillars of that Empire in South Africa. Within less than a decade after his romantic adventures in the field—where he was nearly shot by Colonel Seely, afterwards Secretary for War—Botha became the first Premier of the new Union of South Africa, which his tact and suave diplomacy had done so much to bring into existence. And, when this country was called upon to face the gravest peril that it had known since the Armada, Botha in person took command of the force which occupied German Southwest Africa, and by so doing contributed more than anyone else could have done to confirm the Boers in their still untried loyalty to the British flag. Louis Botha was a great man, and his biographer hardly exceeds the limits of just praise in calling him the Washington of South Africa.

We already possess a statesmanlike biography of Botha from the pen of Lord Buxton. Dr. Engelenburg, whose interesting book was originally written in Africaans for his own countrymen, naturally dwells at much greater length on the details of South African politics. But his book deserves a wider audience for the sake of its picture of Botha as a man and a farmer, no less than as a soldier and a statesman. There is a charming little account of a visit which Botha paid in his later years to the merino stud farm of the French Government, where he picked out from a herd of 150 the three best rams which the Government owned. The manager explained that he could not possibly sell them, and added that he would never have shown them to an ordinary purchaser, but he could not have guessed that the famous Boer general was "such an exceptionally clever sheep expert."

The best thing in the book is the introduction, in which General Smuts sums up his twenty-one years of intimacy with the man whom he loved, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He tells two stories which deserve wide circulation. One relates to the night when Botha was striving to keep De la Rey from rebellion in 1914, and finally said to him, "Oom Koos, it may be the will of God that this nation shall be free and independent. But nothing will ever convince me that it is the will of God that this shall be brought about through treachery and dishonour." The other describes how, on the day when the Peace Treaty was signed at Versailles, Botha's thoughts went back sixteen years to Vereeniging, and he scribbled in Dutch on his agenda paper: "God's laws shall be imposed on all

people with justice under the new sun; and we shall continue to pray that they will be applied to mankind in love and peace and Christian charity. To-day I think of the 31st May, 1902."

NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

The Good Companions. By J. B. Priestley. Heinemann. 10s. 6d.

M R. PRIESTLEY'S new novel is planned on the most generous scale. It is immensely long, it has an immense number of characters, and it treats of every kind of life, and every quality of person, the rich and the poor, the happy and the wretched. Being an itinerant semi-picaresque novel, it moves about a great deal and gives representative pictures of England, both town and country-side. It is in fact a survey of contemporary life—its "note" being inclusiveness, it rejects nothing.

Reading this spacious work one is immediately aware of a new feeling—a feeling of freedom. Suddenly one realizes that in nearly all modern novels there is an airlessness, a sense of cramped quarters. This airlessness Mr. Priestley has got rid of, and we breathe freely and gratefully. Of course, the novelist's task is enormously lightened if he confines his characters to one spot. If they cannot get away from each other their relationships become irritated and inflamed and ripe for tragedy. It might be supposed that Mr. Priestley by forgoing the convention of making his characters immobile, loses the resultant automatic tension which does half the novelist's work for him. But no. It is true that the Pierrot troupe, the Good Companions, have England before them, but they are enclosed in the microcosm constituted by their concert party—their freedom of movement is compensated for by many restrictions and disabilities. But on the whole it is the sense of freedom that prevails.

Mr. Priestley has chosen three centres round which to weave his vast romance—for, as one would expect, 'The Good Companions' is a romantic novel. These three persons, a Yorkshire carpenter, a lady from the Cotswold country of good family and small but independent means, and a junior master from a private school in the Eastern Counties, discontented with their lives, throw over their immediate cares and occupations and cut themselves adrift. Fate brings them together and merges them into the concert party, Oakroyd as carpenter, Jollifant as pianist, Miss Trant as patroness. There are other members of the party, but these remain the most important. Mr. Priestley has many qualities as a writer—humour, sympathy, good sense, invention, an excellent ear both for dialect and dialogue. But what impresses the reader immediately is his control over his material; he marshals this tremendous array of scenes and characters as if it were child's play—a kind of golden lucidity shines through the book. Many picaresque novels get out of hand; the author lingers over a favourite incident and sacrifices the proportion of the book. 'Tom Jones' and 'Lavengro' are instances of this. Mr. Priestley keeps his scale perfectly, and one's sense of the harmonious relationship of the parts to each other and to the whole work is an unfailing pleasure.

It is, as I have said, in the main a picaresque novel: once the chief personages are brought together the narrative follows the course of the concert party from town to town. This method imposes a great strain on a writer's inventive faculty, especially in an age like ours, so poor (one would think) in romantic adventures, indeed in any kind of adventure. But Mr. Priestley's creative gift is equal to its task. He understands the Romance of the Road, and he con-

trives a vast number of incidents, all sufficiently like contemporary life to satisfy probability and yet so touched and heightened and transformed by romantic feeling that they kindle the imagination. There is no apparatus of romance; no posturing, no use of exotic words, no deliberate avoidance of the everyday world. The characters whom Mr. Priestley selects to embody the romantic spirit are mostly poor, generally prosaic, and sometimes shady—not the stuff of which Romance is generally made; of the stuff, indeed, out of which most novelists make dreary realistic chronicles.

Mr. Priestley sees them not with the pity of the slum visitor, nor with the exasperated admiration of the social reformer. Like Dickens, he accepts them. And like Dickens, he both makes fun of them and gets fun out of them. Mr. Priestley is extraordinarily English; he is the ordinary Englishman writ large, and nothing in his literary equipment is more English than his sense of humour. In every minor disaster he finds something funny; all misdirected effort—the effort people make to be like each other, the effort they make to be unlike, nourishes his comic spirit. Some readers may find him too robustious, too facetious, too determined to look on the bright side. I do not agree with them. There is perhaps none of the hundred or so figures that pass across the stage about whom Mr. Priestley, like an inspired bus-conductor, does not make some ironical comment. But these comments are not wounding; their satire is creative, not destructive. Though it has passages of great pathos—for example, the death of Oakroyd's wife—the general tone of the book is sanguine and exhilarating. It is as if the magnitude and grandeur of his task had infected Mr. Priestley's spirits. What an antidote is 'The Good Companions' to other works of similar scope and pretensions, to 'The American Tragedy,' for instance, and to 'Point-Counter-Point'! In spite of the mental vitality of both authors, the pictures they present, one of American materialism, the other of European intellectualism, are heavy with fatigue. No buoyancy, no impulse, no faith, no hope, and very little charity. In Mr. Priestley's pages this fatigue is never felt. In his characters the vital essence, the rising sap of life, presses upwards, puts out leaves and blossoms.

It may be that he exaggerates the prevalence of animal spirits, and that in all lives there are longer periods of despondency than his heartiness admits. It may be that the organized "plot" of his novel, with its three happy endings, is too flattering a mirror of contemporary existence. It may be that Mr. Priestley has been too much of a fairy god-mother to all his creations, and that their wishes have been father to his thoughts. My contention is that for the project he has so magnificently carried out his attitude of mind is the best possible; it may err in the direction of cheerfulness, but in general it corresponds to what ordinary human beings feel when daily presented with the fact of living. But I don't want to represent Mr. Priestley as a kind of literary Uncle Kruschen, demonstrating to his readers a life of spiritual hygiene, so I will conclude by quoting his picture of Tewborough, a picture in miniature of one aspect of England, a rather sombre picture in which the shade encroaches upon the light:

Cathedral cities, market towns, ports forgotten by the sea, spas long out of fashion, all these can decay beautifully, and often their charm increases as the life ebbs out of them. Industrial towns, like steam engines, are only even tolerable if they are in working order and puffing away. Tewborough was like an engine with a burst boiler lying on the side of a road; it was a money-making machine that had almost stopped working, for only a wheel here and there shakily revolved, or a pulley gave a groan or two; it was a factory that now could show you nothing but broken windows and litter and mouldering ledgers and a muttering caretaker; it was nothing but an old cash-box containing only dust and cobwebs and a few forgotten pence. Trade in Tewborough had nearly disappeared altogether, and it was quite obvious that it would never come back again, would always prefer other and pleasanter places.

Ready on Monday

J. B. PRIESTLEY'S

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SHORTER NOTICES

Tramping to Lourdes. By John Gibbons. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

IMAGINE an account of a walk across France, from Mont St. Michel to Lourdes, written by a man of forty-six, living in Hornsey. If the man has not travelled, knows no French, and cannot write, the book will probably be clumsy, tiring and full of chatter. It may possibly be entertaining because of its very simplicity.

This book is remarkable because an unsophisticated man has set down his impressions without any self-consciousness. He has not tried to be a writer. He has not fussed about his style. And the result is something startlingly unusual. The physical feat was no mean one, and the circumstances in which it was undertaken make it the more interesting. From first word to last word, the author's heart is set on his pilgrimage, and so we are spared the stale panegyrics of cathedrals and cities and landscapes. There is more meat in this book than in ninety-nine so-called travel-books out of a hundred. Every time the author tells us of an experience, he reveals a little more about himself, and his description of the water at Lourdes, and his opinion of Zola, are worth going a long way to read. Of the water he says: "It is quite ordinary water, and it was not there before, and it is there now, and people get cured by bathing in it, and we do not know how. And that is all there is about it." As for the Great Realist, he calls him a "common liar." There is adventure, philosophy and plenty of fun in this book. And on more than one occasion it is deeply moving.

The History of Hayy ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Simon Ockley. Revised with an Introduction by A. S. Fulton. Chapman and Hall. 21s.

THIS is the story of a self-taught philosopher who, never having seen another human being, arrived at the state where his intellect, seeking union with the One Eternal Spirit, merges into the Active Intellect, and thus achieves the utmost fullness of knowledge and ineffable felicity in mystic union. At this stage another human being intrudes on his solitude and he learns of the existence of mankind. He resolves to give them the benefit of his knowledge, but is repulsed. The book is an admirable introduction to one side of Moslem mystical philosophy and to the views current just before the introduction of Arabic learning to the West. Mr. Fulton's introduction is extremely well put together, it is exactly what is needed for an understanding of the story. Hay ibn Yuktan—the name by which it was introduced to Europe—had many imitators right up to the end of the eighteenth century, and was translated several times. Mr. Fulton has revised and corrected one of these versions, and given us a standard text of one of the minor classics of Eastern Story.

British History. By Ramsay Muir. Philip. 7s. 6d.

THIS volume, containing some 800 pages, is an abridgment for school purposes of the author's "Short History of the British Commonwealth." Its scope is indicated by the slightly grandiloquent subtitle, which reads: "A Survey of the History of all the British People." The work differs from others of its type in attempting to give in a single narrative the history of Scotland, Ireland, the Dominions and Colonies and to some extent the history of America along with that of England. This gives the book a distinct usefulness, and the short lists of supplementary books also have value. In one of these there is an odd slip—Macaulay's "famous second chapter" is referred to where his third chapter is meant. The range is from Paleolithic man to the general election of 1929, "the first election decided by complete democracy." The judgments in this book are frequently rather conventional, but they are the author's own.

Roman Law in Medieval Europe. By Paul Vinogradoff. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 5s.

THIS book, though technically a second edition, is quite new to the general reader. It is based on a series of lectures given in 1909, and is an illuminating but simple survey of the transition between the gradual decay of Roman law under the Empire and the establishment of national systems of law in France, England and Germany. As different barbarian peoples were brought within the confines of the Roman Empire, conflicting conceptions of law appeared; as the central organization broke down, the local rulers were forced to compromise and simplify their rules; each race had its own law and when a dispute arose between men of differing laws, the principles of Roman law were most often called on to settle it. Readers of history know already Mr. Vinogradoff's powers of exposition; he has made this study deeply interesting as well as informative.

Famous Houses and Literary Shrines of London. By A. St. John Adcock. Dent. 5s.

THIS is a new and attractive reprint of a book which was first published in 1912. Mr. Adcock is well known as an authority on London, and in this volume he has amassed much

interesting material. His itinerary extends from St. John's Wood to Wimbledon, and embraces Hampstead, Battersea, Chelsea, Soho, and the City itself. There are many stories about famous Londoners, and in the concluding section we are given some curious glimpses into the life of that eccentric artist, George Morland. Once, when Morland had escaped from the town for a short holiday in Brighton, he wrote to his brother giving him a list of what he had drunk in a single day. Here it is: "Hollands gin, rum and milk—before breakfast. Coffee—for breakfast. Hollands, porter, shrub, ale, Hollands, port wine and ginger, bottled ale—these before dinner. Porter, bottled porter, punch, porter, ale, opium and water. Port wine at supper. Gin, shrub, and rum on going to bed." Among the various prominent personages whom one encounters in Mr. Adcock's lively pages are Pope, Shelley, Dickens, Thackeray, Addison, Robert Browning, Charles Reade and Charles Lamb. The book—admirably illustrated by Mr. Frederick Adcock—is a valuable contribution to the literature of the town.

ACROSTICS

PUBLISHERS' PRIZE

The firms whose names are printed on the Competition Coupon offer a Weekly Prize in our Acrostic Competition—a book reviewed, at length or briefly, in that issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW in which the Acrostic appears. (Books mentioned in "New Books at a Glance" are excluded: they may be reviewed later.)

RULES

1. The book must be chosen when the solution is sent.
2. It must be published by a firm in the list on the coupon, its price must not exceed a guinea, and it must not be one of an edition sold only in sets.
3. The coupon for the week must be enclosed.
4. Envelopes must be marked "Acrostic" and addressed to the Acrostic Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2.
5. Solutions must reach us not later than the Thursday following the date of publication.
6. Ties will be decided by lot.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 385

(CLOSING DATE: First post Thursday, August 8)

FAMED ROMAN GOVERNOR AND JEWISH KING
WHOSE PRAISES NEVER POET CARED TO SING.

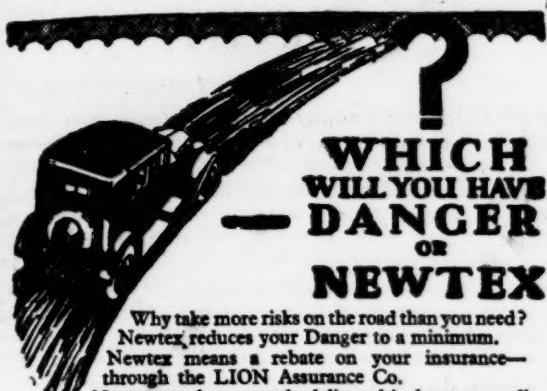
1. A ruler with an oval plate inside him.
2. So disputatious, no one can abide him.
3. Close-fisted, careful, looks at every penny.
4. Cut short a pain perhaps as bad as any.
5. The Great Auk's gone for good, the Little's me.
6. Paying small heed to aught that he may see.
7. Slight is the wound; a gnawer's at its heart.
8. My oil and leather come into the mart.
9. Winning our confidence by flattering words.
10. Stocked by good housewives and by certain birds.
11. How happy was she when Anchises bussed her!
12. A glossy silk-stuff with a wavy lustre.
13. To guard our monarch do these horsemen muster.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 383

TWO WINGED ONES—BEASTIE SMALL, AND NOBLE BIRD
EXTINCT IN ENGLAND; BUT, AS I HAVE HEARD,
IT ONCE WAS COMMON UPON SALISBURY PLAIN.

THE BEASTIE EATS THE GNATS THAT CAUSE US PAIN.

1. Pastime of Kings, and mean men not a few.
2. Frequent in China: we can boast ours too.
3. This follows, sir,—deny it if you can!
4. For me was Samuel touched by good Queen Anne.
5. To him the Sphinx presents an easy riddle.
6. Of shirt-sleeve's end you'll now extract the middle.
7. One-half of this schismatic shall content us.
8. No stranger beast New Holland ever sent us.
9. Foe to refreshing calm and soothing quiet.
10. Gold-jacketed, this article of diet.
11. The story of his life he puts in writing.
12. By killing flies, against it you are fighting.



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Book Bargains

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 Greville Memoirs. 8 vols. 1875. £3.
 Works of Edward FitzGerald, translator of Omar Khayyam. 2 vols. 1887. 30s.
 Tichborne Trial. Folio. Complete in Parts. Rare illustrated record. 1875. 25s.
 Hardy's Wessex Novels. 17 vols. original issue. 1894. Rare. £12 10s.
 Comte's System of Positive Polity. 4 vols. 1875. £3 10s.
 Stirling's Secret of Hegel. 1898. 10s.
 Locke's Human Understanding by Fraser. 2 vols. Best Edition. Oxford. 1894. £1 1s.
 Rogers's History of Babylonia and Assyria. 2 vols. 1901. 12s.
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 Thiers's History of the French Revolution, Portraits and other illustrations. 5 vols. London 1838. £3 10s.
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 Published at £4 4s.
 Milne's Gallery of Children. L.P. £3 3s.
 Noel Williams. Life of Queen Margot. 15s. Published at 42s.
 Lucas. John Constable the Painter. 35s. Published at 63s.

BOOKS WANTED

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Solution of Acrostic No. 383

H	orce-racini	G ¹	This has been called the Sport of
O	pium-eate	R ²	Kings.
R	etinu	E	³ De Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium-eater," published in the London Magazine, about 1821, at once made him
S	croful	A	famous.
E	gyptologis	T	
wriS	t	Band	
H	ug	Uenot	
O	rnithorhynchu	S	³ The common house-fly is the principal agent in the spreading
E	xcitement	T	of typhoid fever and other diseases, and relentless war should
B	anan	A	eases, a
A	utobiographe	R	be waged against it.
T	yphoi	D ²	

ACROSTIC NO. 383.—The winner is "H. C. M." Sir Horace Monro, Crosbie West, Newton Stewart, Scotland, who has selected as his prize "Peter Simple," by Captain Marryat, published by Dent and reviewed in our columns on July 20. One other competitor named this book, thirty-one chose "Private Letters: Pagan and Christian," thirteen "Carlyle to Threescore-and-ten," etc., etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—Iago, Madge, F. M. Petty.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Miss Carter, Clam, J. R. Cripps, Gay, Harbord-House, John Lennie, Lillian, Martha, N. O. Sellam, Sisyphus, Tyro, C. J. Warden, Yendu.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Barberry, Boskerris, Mrs. J. Butler, Carlton, Ceyx, John Coope, Mrs. Alice Crooke, Maud Crowther, G. M. Fowler, Hanworth, Jeff, Jop, A. M. W. Maxwell, Met, Mrs. Milne, H. de R. Morgan, Lady Mottram, Polamar, Raalte, St. Ives, Stucco, H. M. Vaughan, Capt. W. R. Wolseley. All others more.

This acrostic proved unexpectedly difficult. Lights 1 and 2 are referred to in my notes to the Solution. One solver argues that a Retinue sometimes goes in advance, but I doubt it—though I read the other day of a general who followed in the van of the army. As regards Light 7, a Huguenot was undoubtedly a schismatic, but Huss was an individual heretic, not the leader of a schism, or one of a body separated from the Church.

NEW BOOKS AT A GLANCE

Where a book is not yet published, the date of publication is added in parentheses.

VERSE AND DRAMA

PLAYS AND PROSE. By Mrs. Gordon Ascher. Elliot Stock. 2s.
COLLECTED POEMS. By Isidore G. Ascher. Elliot Stock. 5s.
THE VIRGIN AND THE CLERK. By A. Kingsley Porter. Williams and Norgate. 3s. 6d.
THE SEVEN WHO SLEPT. By A. Kingsley Porter. Williams and Norgate. 3s. 6d.

FICTION

HIMSELF AND MR. RAIKES. By W. B. Maxwell. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.
THE FATAL CALL. By Albert Dorrington. Methuen. 7s. 6d.
THE MURDER OF AN OLD MAN. By David Frome. Methuen. 3s. 6d.
YOUNG MRS. GREELEY. By Booth Tarkington. Heinemann. 6s.
HIDDEN DOORS. By Neill M. Gunn. The Porpoise Press. 6s. (Aug. 5.)
THE PEACH-FIRE. By G. M. Hort. Melrose. 7s. 6d.

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BRITTANY. Ward Lock (Tourist Handbooks.) 5s.
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MISCELLANEOUS

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. By F. S. M. Bennett. Chapman and Hall. 5s.
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THE KING'S REPUBLICS. By H. J. Schlosberg. Stevens. 7s. 6d.
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THE AEROPLANE DRAWING BOOK. By F. E. Morgan. Skeffington. 1s. 6d.
A SHORT CATALOGUE OF BOOKS PRINTED IN ENGLAND, AND ENGLISH BOOKS PRINTED ABROAD BEFORE 1641, IN THE LIBRARY OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD. Compiled by H. A. Wheeler. Longmans. 10s. 6d.

REPRINTS

THE UNIVERSAL ASPECTS OF FASCISM. By J. S. Barnes. Williams and Norgate. 10s. 6d.
A MODERN COMEDY. By John Galsworthy. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

THE CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday

THE Home Railway interim dividends have come as an oasis in the desert to the Stock Exchange where business has fallen to the low ebb proverbially associated with the summer holiday season, coupled with the marking down of prices caused by the record efflux of gold from the Bank of England. Had it not been for the general depression, these Home Railway announcements would probably have had a more general and beneficial effect. As it is, after causing a sharp advance in certain of the counters directly concerned, it has been followed by the inevitable setback. Probably the most significant feature of these interim dividend declarations is the fact that the weekly published traffic returns not merely do not provide definite information on which to base the dividend-earning capacity of the companies concerned, but actually lead to an entirely erroneous conclusion being formed. Taking the example of the London Midland and Scottish Railway, published traffics have shown a decrease of over £500,000 compared with last year's figures, and there is little doubt that many small investors sold their Home Rails on these figures in a fit of nervousness. We now learn that although traffics had decreased by some half million pounds, economies have been effected, reducing expenditure by some £1,200,000. I feel confident in saying that if the proportional quota of this figure had been published monthly, with the decreases in revenue, the most nervous of holders would not have been alarmed and the stock would not have fallen to the low levels that it reached. The directors of the railway companies are certainly to be congratulated on the economies they have effected; at the same time they cannot escape the responsibility of supplying their stockholders from week to week with information which they must have realized was painting an entirely false picture of the position. I have repeatedly urged the need for a reform of this nature; I refer to the question again because the figures published last week emphasize the necessity for the reform.

Turning to the dividend declarations themselves, surprise has been freely expressed that, despite the probability that the savings caused by the reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in wages will not continue, the Directors of both the Great Western and the London Midland and Scottish saw fit to make such generous distributions. It is suggested in certain directions that these increased interim dividends have been declared with the object of creating a more favourable atmosphere for any further capital that might be required for modernizing the railways. In any case, the distributions announced denote optimism as to the future, which is very welcome these days, when pessimism seems to be at a premium.

BRITISH CELANESE

The report of British Celanese Limited for the year ended February 28 last, issued last week, presents little consolation to those who subscribed for shares at £3 each, or even to those who have purchased them more recently on the optimistic rumours that were prevalent. The fact that the trading profit for the year amounted to £1,238,905 as compared with £1,643,212 for the previous year is disappointing, particularly as the net profit, after providing for debenture and bond interest, royalties, etc., amounted to

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Company Meetings

MALAYALAM PLANTATIONS LTD.

LARGELY INCREASED TEA CROP

The Eighth Ordinary General Meeting of Malayalam Plantations Ltd. was held on July 31 at 3 Idol Lane, London, E.C.

Mr. H. J. Welch (the chairman) said that during their financial year 1928-9, the tea crop had amounted to 9,622,748 lb, being an increase of 457,188 lb over the previous crop. The average yield had been 600 lb. per acre, as against 664 lb. for the previous year. The f.o.b. cost of production had been 9.07d. per lb., against 9.24d. The average net price realized had been 1s. 1.17d. per lb., as against 1s. 2.02d. Consequent upon the fall in price, their profit per acre had been reduced to £11 18s. 9d., notwithstanding the increase in yield and the reduction in cost. The estates superintendents estimated the current year's tea crop was 9,530,000 lb. They had harvested for the first three months ended in June 3,026,000 lb. That was an increase, compared with last year, of over 23,000 lb. There were no forward sales except for tea dust.

Lately a large proportion of tea available in sale had been of poor and unattractive quality, but in the near future better quality supplies were expected from Ceylon, India, and the Dutch East Indies. Good and fine quality teas remained in strong demand and the market was likely to benefit, as larger supplies of more attractive tea came forward. The removal of the tea duty in this country had strengthened the demand for fine and good medium tea. It was also hoped that it would encourage a further general increase in consumption.

RUBBER CROP

The rubber crop harvested was 4,763,404 lb. That was an increase of 1,595,000 lb. over that of the previous year, of which 1,345,914 lb. had been harvested from the Mooply Estates, which their company had taken over from April 1, 1928. The f.o.b. cost of production had been lower than that for the previous year, and the second lowest in the history of the company. The average net price realized had been, however, only 9.82d per lb., against 1s. 2.78d per lb. in the previous year. That fall in price reduced their profit per acre to £3 7s. 3d.

The superintendents estimated production of 4,856,000 lb. for the current year, and they had harvested for the first three months, ended in June, 1,291,328 lb., an increase of over 100,000 lb. There were small forward sales amounting to 18,000 lb. at 11.64d. per lb. London equivalent.

The output of Dutch native rubber, the other important uncertain factor, had shown some increase over the rate at which it had been produced during the latter part of 1928, but any substantial increase in the output of that rubber during the second half of 1929 was not very probable. Fortunately, the absorption of crude rubber during the first half of the current year had been on a very high level, and they saw world absorption proceeding at the highly satisfactory rate of 800,000 tons per annum during 1929. The relative rate of increase was apparently greater in the rest of the world than it was even in America.

World stocks were now abnormally low when measured against the existing rate of absorption, and would probably prove to be a wholly insufficient buffer between the manufacturer and the speculator if, as appeared probable, absorption during 1930 should exceed production.

AGRICULTURAL SURVEY

As to the future they would continue to concentrate especially upon an increase of the profit per acre from their existing tea areas by the constant replanting of the vacancies which exist or may occur, by maintaining an up-to-date and modern equipment of their factories, and by the most energetic efforts for the improvement of the quality of their manufactured teas.

They hoped to record further improvements of the yield of rubber, as a result of their spraying, cultivation and cover crops; also that their managers would be able to deliver still higher percentages of first-grade rubber than they had done in the past.

They were continuing their promising experiments to ascertain whether they could not gradually, and over a lengthy period of years, replace all their poor-yielding rubber trees with good bushes planted from selected seed and/or bud grafted plants, retaining in each area all their existing good-yielding trees.

The year's working had resulted in a total net profit from the estates of £229,820, which was equal to over 14 per cent. upon the issued capital. The directors recommended the paying of a final dividend of 9 per cent., making 12 per cent. for the year. Additional capital was required to bring the present immature areas into bearing, to erect additional factories, to provide for further extensions of the tea areas, to provide bungalows for necessary additions to the staff, and to provide additional working capital rendered necessary by the growth of the company. The directors had accordingly decided to offer to the shareholders 162,682 shares at 10s. premium per share in the proportion of one new share for every ten shares now held. The position and prospects of the company and the low net cost per acre of the planted areas made the new shares well worth their issue price.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

BARTHOLOMEW (LONDON)

The Ordinary General Meeting of Bartholomew (London), Ltd., was held on July 26 at the Great Eastern Hotel, E.C. Sir Godfrey Y. Lagden, K.C.M.G., presided, and, in moving the adoption of the report, said: When presiding at the annual meeting last year I made use of the quotation "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," the evil being the 100 per cent. dividend we then declared, because it gave us such a heavy burden to live up to. I went on to say that the remarkable success of our companies make it inevitable for us to expect keen and increased competition. In fact, we had created problems for ourselves, and practically invited new avenues of competition, the force of which we have severely felt. Fortunately, we have in our local managing directors, Messrs. Bartholomew and Allen, two men who are alive to the situation and capable of dealing with it.

The favourable results of our two companies since their origin seem to have impressed certain people with the idea that the Gold Coast and Nigeria offered them a veritable trading Utopia, and that it was only necessary to embark on trading adventures there to reap speedy fortunes. The past year has served to disillusion them, and some of them are probably poorer if not wiser for their experience. Several shareholders have raised the question why the dividend equalization fund has not been drawn on and a larger dividend recommended on the ordinary shares. That dividend equalization fund has been created, and I hope it will be possible to add to it in the future, so that we may safeguard ourselves against the possibility of poor years; but we are not inclined to regard as a poor year one like the last, for which we are able to recommend the payment of a dividend of 10 per cent. on our Preference shares and 60 per cent. on our ordinary shares.

The chairman, having replied to a few questions, put the resolution for the adoption of the report and accounts to the meeting, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. T. H. Phillips, M.B.E., in moving the re-election of the retiring director, Sir Godfrey Y. Lagden, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., said: Ladies and gentlemen, I have pleasure in proposing that Sir Godfrey Lagden be re-elected a director of this company. Sir Godfrey has told you that the London Board does not interfere in the management of the African companies. That is true, but, at the same time, the wide experience Sir Godfrey has had in the Colonial Service is ever at our disposal and at the disposal of the directors of the African companies. It therefore gives me much pleasure to move his re-election.

The resolution was seconded and carried with acclamation.

THRELFALL'S BREWERY CO., LTD.

The Forty-Second Annual General Meeting of Threlfall's Brewery Company, Ltd., was held on July 31 at Cannon Street Hotel, E.C. Major C. M. Threlfall (the chairman) presided.

The chairman said: Before commencing our business to-day it is with extreme regret I rise to remind you of the very severe losses we have sustained since our last meeting here in the deaths, first, of Mr. Tonks and, then, Mr. Feeny.

I cannot say what a relief it has been to myself through this trying period to know there was one amongst us capable and able to take on the difficult and very onerous position of managing director—I refer to Mr. G. M. Galloway. I can assure you Mr. Galloway will both well and honourably carry on the future of this company; I know of no quality of which he is lacking; he is tactful, very efficient and hard working.

Referring now to the directors' report and accounts for the year ended June 30, 1929, I presume that, as you have had an opportunity of perusing them you will take them as read. ("Agreed! ")

It is very gratifying to your board to be able to submit to you to-day results which, I think, you will agree are again highly satisfactory, considering the many factors and adverse influences which have had to be contended with during the past year.

The gross profit for the year is £480,793 1s. 1d., and after writing off for depreciation of properties, plant, furniture and fixtures, increasing the fire insurance fund to £54,800, and making a reserve for salary and wage bonus to employees, there remains a net trading profit of £418,037 3s. 7d.

After deducting interest on debenture stock, interest on deposits, directors' fees, compensation levy, and adding transfer fees and bank interest, there is a net profit of £351,006 12s 6d. for the year, which, together with the carry-forward from last year, makes a total of £777,107 1s. 7d. to be dealt with.

I now beg to move the adoption of the report and accounts, and that a dividend be paid at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum on the preference shares and a dividend at the rate of 20 per cent. per annum on the ordinary shares for the half-year ended June 30, 1929, which, with the interim dividends, make 6 per cent. on the preference and 20 per cent. on the ordinary shares for the year. The amount carried forward to next year is £475,589 3s 7d. The dividends to be paid less income-tax at 4s. in the £, and the warrants will be posted to-day. (Cheers.)

Mr. G. M. Galloway (managing director) seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

only £326,909 as compared with an estimate, made by Dr. Dreyfus two years ago, of a net profit of £400,000 per month. Although both classes of preference shareholders received their dividends, these payments necessitated carrying forward a smaller sum than was brought forward. Some consolation is provided by the statement that in the current financial year there has been a substantial increase in sales, and the directors state that notwithstanding the continuance of unfavourable conditions in the textile trade, the business has continued to progress, with the result that since the beginning of the present financial year the monthly profits have steadily increased. The general meeting has been postponed until September, when it is to be hoped that the chairman will have a satisfactory story of continued progress to unfold.

IMPERIAL TOBACCO

Despite the general depression, the shares of the leading tobacco companies during the past week have been well maintained, a fact attributable to the interim dividend declaration by the Imperial Tobacco Company. The fact that the directors of this great combine have been able to declare an interim dividend of 7 per cent. on the increased capital, which would have been equivalent to $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the old capital as compared with $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. paid last year, is an encouraging omen as to the final dividend. The opinion has frequently been expressed in the past that both "Imps" and "Bats" are thoroughly sound for permanent investment purposes; this opinion I repeat.

MARGARINE UNION

Last week I drew attention to the fact that Margarine Union shares were desirable as a holding for permanent investment. Despite the general depression, these shares were in demand this week. I again refer to them in these notes, as they are considered so particularly promising an investment.

ARISTON

The uncertainties of mining are unfortunately illustrated in the communication which the directors of the Ariston Mines have issued to their shareholders this week. It will be remembered that the production stage of the company's property was greatly delayed owing to the wreck of the steamship *Bonny*, a year or so ago, which was conveying fundamental parts of the plant to the property. Last January, however, the recovery of gold was started, and month by month returns were improving, thus supplying evidence that the estimates made by the company's engineer, Mr. Way, were justified. The news now comes that the power plant has entirely broken down, with the result that several months must elapse before revenue earnings continue. The previous delay led to the company's funds being very seriously depleted, and this latest stroke of misfortune has necessitated the directors placing a reconstruction scheme before their shareholders. In view of the value of the mine, those who can afford the speculative risk involved are advised to accept the scheme.

UNION CORPORATION

Owing to the generally unfavourable conditions, Union Corporation shares have fallen to a level at which they must be deemed particularly attractive. The management of this holding company, as has been previously stated, is in sound hands; its dividend record is an excellent one, and anyone acquiring shares at the present level should reap a satisfactory reward.

COMPANY MEETINGS

In this issue will be found reports of the meetings of the following companies: Malayalam Plantations, Ltd., Bartholomew (London), Ltd., Threlfall's Brewery Co., Ltd., Bwana M'Kubwa Copper Mining Co., Ltd., Scribbans and Co., Ltd.

TAURUS

Company Meetings

BWANA M'KUBWA COPPER MINING

PROGRESS AT BWANA AND N'KANA; SIR EDMUND DAVIS REVIEWS THE POSITION

The Ordinary General Meeting of the Bwana M'Kubwa Copper Mining Co., Ltd., was held on Thursday last, at the Cannon Street Hotel, E.C.

Sir Edmund Davis (the chairman), said that the debit balance to profit and loss account at March 31, 1928, of £289,458 had been extinguished by deducting therefrom the net surplus for the year under review of £83,442 and an amount of £206,016 transferred from premiums on share account, and they were now in the satisfactory position of being able to commence the current financial year with a clean sheet.

At Bwana they had had troubles in connection with the original plant erected to deal with a new process which at the time was considered suitable to treat the oxidized ore in the Bwana mine. Experience gained in the treating of ore had resulted in a very considerable remodelling of the plant. They had installed a large amount of new plant for the treatment of the fines and they had now given them a plant that was running well on a commercial basis, the result being that for July on an output which they estimated at a little over 600 short tons of copper, they should make a profit of about £5,000. For August, they understood that the output should be somewhat higher and, therefore, subject to there being no fall in the price of copper, an increased profit should be made. They did not wish to forecast the result of future operations on Bwana oxidized ore as, though the plant was working well and the process now being used was satisfactory, the question of profits depended upon the grade of ore sent to the plant and the price which they might obtain for the copper produced.

The N'Kana mine was one of the great mines of the world. They had in one section proved the existence of an ore body 5,000 ft. long with both ends open. On another section there was a further ore body 7,900 ft. in length, with an intervening space between the two of about 3,300 ft., which, if it also contained the ore body at depth, would make a length of 16,200 ft. During the year under review, 25,879 ft. had been drilled, making a total of 29,826 ft., and if they added this year's drilling to July 20, they had a total of nearly eight miles, which was a record for Northern Rhodesia. The result of the drilling on the N'Kana southern section had proved an ore body with an average true width of 20 ft. on a length of 5,900 ft., containing 6,000,000 tons of ore averaging 3.1 per cent. copper, of which 4,400,000 tons were clean disseminated sulphide. On the N'Kana northern section there had been proved an ore body with an average true width of 20 ft. containing 36,000,000 tons of ore average 4.4 per cent. copper, of which 32,500,000 tons were clean disseminated sulphide, with a much larger tonnage indicated.

RAPID DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

They intended to open out the N'Kana proposition at a very rapid rate and for that purpose had sunk their No. 1 Main Vertical Shaft to a depth of 460 ft. and were driving crosscuts to the ore body on the 300 ft. and 450 ft. levels. In addition, they were sinking a further main vertical shaft and a pilot shaft, the latter to be used for development until the property reached the production stage and thereafter for other purposes. They had laid out a town site and were building a large number of houses. A large concentrating plant would be erected and a power and smelting plant would also be put up. The mine was being connected with the Rhodesian Railway's system by a branch line which should be available by the end of the present year. From then onwards, development would be dealt with at a very rapid rate, so that the mine should be ready at the earliest possible date and be in a position to supply ore at the rate of 5,000 tons per day required for the first unit of plant which they intended to erect. The development of the mine and the indications of huge tonnages were so satisfactory that they would, in course of time, certainly have to duplicate the plant.

It was their intention to do everything they could to place orders for plant in Great Britain, and they had already started drawing miners from the North of England. Should they prove satisfactory, there should gradually be found employment for a fairly large English mining population in Northern Rhodesia. They intended to leave nothing undone to make their work agreeable and their residence healthy and congenial.

Having dealt with the position at Bwana and N'Kana, it was necessary to add to the information contained in the report relating to a portion of their property which was being developed by the Rhodesian Selection Trust, in which they had retained such a very large interest. In the first instance, they had Mufulira, on which there had already been proved a

length of 7,000 ft. along the ore body and down to a vertical depth of 1,000 ft. At that particular depth the ore body averaged 108 ft. thick with a value of about 5 per cent. copper. They looked forward with very great interest to the development of that particular property on a large scale, as it was sure to prove to be one of the leading producers in the world. At a later date, other properties being developed by the Rhodesian Selection Trust would be dealt with.

POSITION OF PROPERTIES

In reviewing the whole position, it was better now that such large tonnages had been proved on their own properties, as well as on those being opened out by the Rhodesian Selection Trust in which they were so largely interested, that they should in future drop references to ore tonnages and speak in terms of copper reserves. He mentioned that, as so many comparisons had in the past generally been made with the American-owned copper mines which were being worked on such a large scale.

The reason for the dropping of that comparison in the future lay in the extraordinary richness of the ore reserves of the Northern Rhodesian Mines in comparison with the United States-owned propositions. As an example, they could take Mufulira; roughly, the ore reserves contained about four times the amount of copper per ton, and N'Kana about three times, of those of the large United States-owned mines. For that reason, those two Northern Rhodesian mines, when equipped, would have a cost less per ton of annual copper produced than in the case of the average of United States-owned mines, and if the present railage rates in Rhodesia were similar to those existing in the United States, the ratio in cost would be far more startling; unfortunately the railage rates in Rhodesia were unduly high. In N'Kana they had already reserves containing about 1,770,000 tons of copper, which at £80 per ton, came to a little over £141,000,000.

There was one other subject to which he must refer—power. They were leaving nothing undone to accelerate development and equipment, and at the same time were taking all necessary steps to reduce working costs to a minimum. In that connection they were in association with other mining and finance companies forming a power company which would instal hydro-electric plant of sufficient capacity to create 100,000 h.p. which should be transmitted at a cheap cost to the various Northern Rhodesian mines.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

SCRIBBANS AND CO., LTD.

The Second Annual General Meeting of Scribbans and Co., Ltd., was held on July 31 at the Hotel Cecil, London, W.C. Mr. Philip E. Hill (the chairman) said: Ladies and gentlemen, we have made a profit for the year of £220,873, subject to income-tax and depreciation, comparable with the figure of £271,418 for the previous twelve months. The result is disappointing, particularly to me, as chairman of the company. Business during the year has been exceedingly difficult. The majority of our customers, as probably you know, are the big multiple shop companies, and they have been and are being subjected to very keen competition. To enable our customers to meet this competition we have reduced our selling prices, and this, with the consequent reduction in our turnover, is responsible for the diminished profits. Although we have reduced our prices, we have maintained the quality of our products, and there is still no firm in this country that produces a cake equal to Scribbans at the same price. The policy the board has adopted should ultimately restore the company's profits.

In January last you were informed that the board had decided not to proceed with the erection of a factory in Germany. Difficulties arose of such a serious nature as to compel us to abandon the scheme. During the past year we have considered every possible avenue for profitable expansion, and after very careful thought we decided to take an interest in the biscuit business, which is akin to our own trade. We have acquired a considerable interest in an old-established and profitable biscuit business, and one which I am satisfied is capable of profitable expansion. We have sold a portion of the business at a profit, but have retained the controlling interest. The result of this transaction will, I am fairly confident, enable us to wipe out the balance of our preliminary expenses and release profits for the payment of dividends or the creation of reserves, which are now applied for writing off preliminary expenses.

The biscuit business is at this moment unable to cope with the public demand for its commodities, and to meet this a new factory and equipment is being erected, which should be in working order in about seven to eight months, and when completed it should be one of the best equipped in this country. The cost of this extension will be paid for out of the resources of the biscuit business, and will not involve Scribbans and Co. in any increase of capital. The profits from this trade expansion will be considerable, and should compensate us for any temporary fluctuation in the profits of the cake trade.

The report and accounts were adopted.

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3 August 1929

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